CHAPTER FOUR

Assessment of Social Development in North Karnataka: 
An Empirical Analysis
The status of social development, particularly education and health care development provided in the last two chapters of the study clearly establishes the fact that on social sector front the region of the Hyderabad-Karnataka within North Karnataka is lagging behind. It is a testimony to the fact that the social development process in Karnataka is region-specific and uneven. The comparison of educational and health indicators of the Bombay-Karnataka with that of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region unequivocally establish the fact that the latter is far behind than the former in fulfilling the educational and health needs of the society. The spread of education in northern region of the state is quite tardy and uneven with huge gaps in terms of regions, sexes, districts, rural-urban areas etc. Female in general and females in rural areas, in particular comprise the least literate group of the society.

The North Karnataka region in the state of Karnataka is far behind in meeting the target of universalisation of the elementary education. The dismal performance of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region in terms of both input and output indicators of social development establishes the fact that there exist regional imbalances within North Karnataka. The school dropout rate is quite high with low rate of retention in the case of girls in the districts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. The poor status of school infrastructure, inadequate number of primary and secondary schools and teachers, poor student-teacher ratio etc, have collectively contributed to the poor development of education in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. Similarly, the input and output indicators of health care development such as the availability of hospitals and doctors, access to basic sanitation and drinking water facilities, family welfare centres etc, have been poor in most parts of North Karnataka. This poor status of health care development in North Karnataka has resulted in poor standard of living, which can be seen from low life expectancy rate, high infant and maternal mortality rates, high rate of crude death rate, poor sex ratio, etc. The prevailing poor status of social development in parts of North Karnataka has strong implications for the development of social capital in backward regions of the state.

This dismal status of education and health in North Karnataka particularly, in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region has been the result of long period of neglect of these two crucial sectors in the development planning of the state. The fact of the matter is that the state seems to have failed in according the place of priority to these sectors in backward regions and always treated them as residual category in terms of public
spending and policy formulation. The lack of politico-administrative wills coupled with faulty perspective of social development of the political elite of the region, in particular and uneven organizational structure of the education and health system, in particular has jeopardized the whole environment of their operational effectiveness. Besides, the social sector networking of all types and all stages is in the situation of multiple crises. The inspection and monitoring system has become totally dysfunctional in northern region of the state of Karnataka. The multiple schooling with different affiliations has disturbed the equilibrium of the system, particularly in backward regions. The influential sections of the society have withdrawn themselves from the government operated education and health institutions and have raised their own institutions with high quality infrastructure. As a consequence, they have no interest in improving their functioning. But it is significant to observe that such a high quality education and health institutions have a restricted access to people in the society. Poor people in backward regions cannot afford to the high costs involved in availing those facilities. However, it is observed in the region that the general public have shown apathetic attitude in questioning the social responsibility of these institutions, which have continued to prosper without fulfilling any social responsibilities.

The very issue of developmental disparities in social development in North Karnataka has become a source of much discontent among the people of North Karnataka. It is noticed in continuously being raised voices of separate statehood for their region within North Karnataka. In fact, at present every state in India faces the problem of regional imbalances in development. But imbalances do vary in degree

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1 The well-known educational institutions and hospitals in both the Bombay-Karnataka and The Hyderabad-Karnataka region are owned and managed by influential regional elites. For example, the Karnataka Lingayat Educational Society (KLE), K.E.Board’s Educational Institutions, Janata Shikshana Samiti’s (JSS) Educational Institutions, Kittel College, H.K.Patil Educational Institutions in Gadag district, Basaveshwara Vidya Vardhak Sangha in Bagalkot, Anjuman Educational Society, B.L.D. Educational Institutions in Bijapur, Rani Parvati Devi (RPD) College in Belgaum, Jarkiholi Educational Institutions, etc, in The Bombay-Karnataka are managed by regional elites. Similarly, in The Hyderabad-Karnataka region, Sharana Basaveshwara Educational Society and The Hyderabad-Karnataka Educational Society in Gulbarga, Kharge’s Educational Institutions, Veerashaiva Educational Institutions in Bellary, Muslim Educational Institutions owned and managed by Kamrul Islam etc, are the prominent private educational institutions. In terms of health facilities, K.L.E. Hospital in Belgaum, Karnataka Medical College and Hospital in Hubli, Shri Dharmastala Manjunatheshwara Medical College and Hospital in Dharwad, etc, in The Bombay-Karnataka and Basaveshwara Medical College and Hospital in Gulbarga, Government Medical College and Hospital in Bellary, Khaja Bande Nawaz Hospital in Gulbarga etc, are the prominent private medical colleges and hospitals in The Hyderabad-Karnataka region. All these privately managed institutions are serving the cause of education, and medical education and health in northern region of the state.
and nature. This is one issue, which has been continuously posing a great challenge to
the planning process of the country. The relatively high rate of unevenness and
subsequent imbalances in development in major sectors of the economy, particularly
social sector and prevalence of poor human development facilities has recently
become the major cause for popular movements in North Karnataka. A near total
stagnation in Agriculture and Industry followed by low standards in education, health,
poor provision of basic amenities, low per capita income, amounting debt and
subsequent high rate of suicides of farmers, particularly in northern districts of the
state etc., show an acute crisis faced by Karnataka in the recent past. This crisis
appears to have seriously jeopardized the long-term sustainability of human capital in
backward regions of the state of Karnataka.

In this context, the present chapter attempts to assess the persisting regional
imbalances in social development within northern region of the state, where the
Hyderabad-Karnataka region continues to remain backward in almost all sectors the
economy and also in terms of social development indicators. This chapter also
evaluates the on-going demand for separate statehood for Uttara Karnataka as a whole
and the public response to such demands within North Karnataka. Besides, an attempt
is also made to locate the missing factors that have contributed the growth or
backwardness of the two different regions i.e., the Bombay-Karnataka and the
Hyderabad-Karnataka regions respectively within North Karnataka. Within this
overall framework, the present chapter is divided into three parts. Part one evaluates
the reasons and factors that are responsible the present status social development in
two different regions of North Karnataka. Part two provides a critical analysis of the
occasional separatist movements within northern region of the state. And part three
explains the response of the state government to growing separatism and lists
developmental activities to redress regional imbalances within the state In all the three
parts, the major arguments made in the study are supported by the fieldwork findings
and investigations. The field study was conducted in Dharwad of the Bombay-
Karnataka region and the Gulbarga and Raichur of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region
in two phases in the year 2005. These three districts were selected for the fieldwork
based on their position in developmental indicators and also they are the epicenter of
separatist movements in northern part of the state. In all 120 people are interviewed to
know their views on issues related to regional imbalances and the question of separate statehood for North Karnataka region.

I

The analysis of the problem of regional imbalances in social development by development economists and scholars have put forward a number of reasons for the persistence of uneven development within North Karnataka. According to the position taken by public-spirited personalities of the region such as men of letters, academicians, social scientists, journalists etc, the prevalence of poor status of social development in northern districts of the state is the outcome of state's failure to boost infrastructure to attract the flow of capital and investment in social sectors of the economy. The study has categorized the following factors as the mainly responsible for the accentuated the poor status of social development in North Karnataka. The following categorization of factors is based on the fieldwork findings.

Historical Legacy

During the fieldwork it was revealed that the present developmental lags in Karnataka emanates from the very process of state formation and are part of historical legacy for the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. 48 per cent of the respondents have cited historical legacy as one of the reasons for the prevalence of regional imbalances in the state. In this regard, the major argument made by political leadership of the region was that of historical reasons. It is important to recall here that the constituting regions of Karnataka state had a varied colonial past. According to them, the Hyderabad-Karnataka region has had a poor status of development during Nizam’s rule and thus remained poor after integration despite concerted efforts by the state government to improve it. It is very clear from this explanation that the political leadership of the region did not held themselves responsible for the poor development in backward districts and instead blame bureaucracy for inefficiency, corruption and poor implementation of developmental programmes meant for backward regions.

On the other hand, the public-spirited personalities of the region, though held that historical legacy is one of the major reasons for the poor development of North Karnataka, but are skeptical about the role of political leadership and officials in ensuring equitable development in the region. M.C. Kodli, retired professor and noted economist of the Bombay-Karnataka region opined that the growing problem of
regional imbalances in the state are not a recent one but it is the resultant of economic status of the region at the pre-unification and post-unification of Karnataka. In fact, they have put forth the view that the problem of uneven development is the result of the problems emanating from the linguistic re-organisation in 1956. In this regard, the study has presented a detailed account on how the state was formed and problems that cropped up during the unification movement in the second chapter of the study. It was found out that the economically heterogeneous regions were put together to form a single state solely based on the principle of linguistic homogeneity alone by the States Reorganisation Commission in 1956. It is also significant to note here that there were strong tendencies of dual Karnataka, predominantly in the erstwhile princely state of Mysore based on the then backwardness of North Karnataka and thus were not interested in unification in 1956. This clearly suggests the fact that the different political communities in the state such as Lingayats in the north and Vokkaligas in the south have not come together to induce equitable development in the post-1956 state, though they were geographically united in 1956.

It was very clear from the argument of Patil Puttappa, veteran journalist and editor-in-chief of the Vishwa Vani and Prapancha published from Hubli, that there is a lack of understanding between the leaders of both the regions. He said, “For citizens to feel resentment towards any kind of discrimination whether it be psychological or material is but human nature. When I was an activist of the whole movement to form the state of Karnataka the powers that be of the then Mysore State abused us stating that they were happy with their kingdom. But they were very quick to join the government and become rulers once the state was formed and a government took office. The history of North Karnataka is one of denied opportunities. For example, 90 per cent of the secretariat is filled with people from one region. Institutions were there in the Mysore kingdom, so was money. Historically, the rulers of the state have neglected North Karnataka. This can be validated by the fact of just seeing the anger of the citizens of North Karnataka. There are more Kannadigas in Mumbai than they are in Bangalore. The state government should take immediate steps to set right the disparity.”

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3 The Sunday Times of India, Bangalore, June 25, 2000.
On both accounts, it clearly suggests that the formation of the state of Karnataka by the SRC was not an emotional unification of all Kannada speaking regions, though the SRC was successful in geographical uniting all Kannada speaking regions in 1956. It also indicates the fact that the hope and aspiration of the SRC that the capital would move from developed regions to backward regions remained unfulfilled in the case of Karnataka. The leading journalist and a strong force in the then unification movement Patil Puttappa and other scholars have time and again deliberated on this issue and called for an emotional integration of the state. The renowned political scientist in Karnataka, Ragahavendra Rao while sharing a similar argument goes on to suggest an appointment of a commission at the national level to study whether the intended objectives of forming states based on the principle of linguistic homogeneity are realised. These observations regarding the historical factors are one of the major reasons for the backwardness of North Karnataka, as different political communities have not developed political understanding to develop northern region of the state in the post-1956 Karnataka. In this regard, the districts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region are the most affected as their socio-economic condition has not improved relatively in comparison with what has been achieved in other parts of the state since 1956. Hence, regional imbalances are a part of historical legacy for the state of Karnataka. 48 per cent of the respondents attribute to historical legacy as one of the important reasons for the persistence of regional imbalances in North Karnataka.

**Role of People’s Representatives in Development**

Another set of scholars and general public has established a direct co-relation between the ruling elite and the persistent uneven social development in the state of Karnataka. To a considerable extent, it seems true that the failure of political leadership of the backward regions and successive state governments in the state to understand the problem of backwardness in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region and to take timely remedial measures to contain the growing unevenness. Interviews with

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6 An Unpublished thesis on “Role of Elites in Regional Development: A Case Study of North Karnataka” by Ratnakar B M underscores on the fact that the elites in northern region of the state have not been instrumental in inducing development in their own region. The concept of regional elites developed in the thesis includes Academic elite, Administrative elite, Business elite, literary elite, Political elite and Religious elite.
academicians, bureaucrats and public-spirited personalities have revealed that the ruling elite has marshaled all their efforts to accrue benefits of the state policies designed to improve major sectors of the economy and human development. It is significant to observe that the integrated areas of the state have thrown up potential leadership who held the reins of the power for considerable period. It is also significant to observe that the Hyderabad-Karnataka region has strong political presence since decades; though not in the number of political leaders but in terms of political strength they carry along with them at the state level is significant. Mr. N. Dharam Singh, the present Chief Minister and Mr. M. Mallikarjun Kharge, the present president of Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) have been holding state power for more than three decades in the state and have won elections consecutively since 1972. It obviously raises questions and serious doubts over their commitment and contribution to their own region. In terms of number of Chief Ministers, the Bombay-Karnataka has more numbers than the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. But the public opinion in the region validates the fact that except Veerendra Patil, no other leading politicians of the region since 1980’s have contributed to the development of northern region of the state. In terms of representation of people’s representatives in the state government, the northern region is not under represented. Politicians from the North Karnataka have always had their share in the state’s power structure. In the 50 years old history of Karnataka after its reorganization, there were many chief ministers from North Karnataka, who were at the helm of affairs for a little more than 20 years just as many years it was under chief ministers from South Karnataka. 40 per

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7 Mr. B.D. Jatti, Mr. Veerendra Patil, Mr. Ramkrishna Hegde, Mr. S.R. Bommai, Mr. H.K. Patil, Mr. N. Dharam Singh, Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge, Malikayya Guttedar, Mr. Bhimmanna Khandre, Kamrul Islam, Vaijanath Patil etc are the important politicians of North Karnataka who have been in the forefront of state politics and have had an opportunity to exercise important political positions at the state level. But during their period, they have initiated no significant developmental activities for the development of their own region. This major finding has enabled the study to develop an argument that they have not made any significant contributions to the development of the region despite remaining in the power for many years and thus makes a case for administrative solution rather than political solution to such problems in Karnataka.

8 It is interesting to note that Mr. B.D. Jatti, Mr. Ramkrishna Hegde and Mr. S.R. Bommai are the Chief Ministers who represented the Bombay-Karnataka region while Mr. Veerendra Patil and Mr. N. Dharam Singh represent the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. It is significant to observe that during Veerendra Patil’s two tenure as Chief Minister (From 29.05.1968 to 18.03.1971 and from 30.11.1989 to 10.10.1990) some notable developmental activities were undertaken such as roads, development of primary and secondary education, drinking water facilities, irrigational projects, primary health centres, construction of water tanks and connecting bridges were the notable developmental activities for northern region of the state.
percent of the respondents are of the opinion that the political leadership of the region is responsible for the backwardness of North Karnataka region.

The public opinion holding people’s representatives responsible for the backwardness of northern regions can be assessed from the point of view of political representation of the region in the state. Of the 224 seats in the State Legislative Assembly, 12 districts of North Karnataka accounts for 97 seats (43 per cent of seats). The representation of North Karnataka MLAs in the ministries, no doubt, has more or less been proportionate to their numbers. The present N. Dharam Singh led coalition government has 14 out of 32 ministers from North Karnataka. Out of 14 ministers from north Karnataka 7 are from the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. During S.M. Krishna-led ministry, for example, ministers from North Karnataka constitute 41.8 per cent. Of the 42 ministers, 18 of them including second-in-command, Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge, was from the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. In the previous J.H. Patel-led ministry, for example, 38 per cent of the ministers were from the north. When S. Nijalingappa government was in power, there was even a feeling in the South that the politicians from North Karnataka were all powerful in the Government with Ramakrishna Hegde as Finance Minister and Veerendra Patil as PWD Minister. People in the south at that point of time even nursed a grouse that they were neglected vis-à-vis their northern counterparts.9

Role of Socio-Cultural Organisation in Development

Another important finding of the study is the presence of socio-cultural organisations in the Bombay-Karnataka region and their critical role in inducing development in the region. There are numerous cultural organisations in Dharwad, one of the cultural centres of Karnataka that have played a critical role to safeguard and promote Kannada culture and literature. Akhil Karnataka Kendra Kannada Kriya Samiti in Dharwad has been more vocal to press the government of the day to initiate steps for development of entire Karnataka. It has often organized many conventions to help unite all Kannadigas and discuss problems pertaining to the whole of Karnataka and try to find adequate and democratic solutions.10 Similarly, the Karnataka Vidya Vardhak Sangha in Dharwad has been the most significant cultural organisation in the Bombay-Karnataka region. It has continuously been raising issues pertaining to the

10 Vijaya Times, Hubli-Dharwad, October 11, 2004, p.3.
development of Kannada culture, Kannada language and development of North Karnataka region. Besides, it has been very much vocal in striving hard for the protection, betterment and preservation of the rich cultural heritage of the region for the last 115 years. The organisation enabled the people of the region to be aware of their past and to utilize the space created by the organisation to come together and discuss issues related to the development of the region. It has called the state government to adopt a time bound programmes for the development of the region. Furthermore, it has severely condemned the gross neglect of the region by people’s representatives, ministers who hail from the region.\textsuperscript{11}

In a more significant way, the Karnataka Vidyavardhak Sangha organizes public meetings to discuss matters relating to the development of the region from time to time. Public personalities such as renowned men of letters, academicians, journalists, and other literary personalities are invited to take part in public discussions and deliberations. This, in turn, has enabled the people of the region to develop their awareness level and their role in development of the region. Apart from Karnataka Vidyavardhak Sangha, private educational institutions, democratic press, etc., in the Bombay-Karnataka region have contributed to the development of this region. The presences of critical socio-cultural organisations in the Bombay-Karnataka region have been the outcome of the strong social movements in colonial Karnataka.\textsuperscript{12}

In contrast, the Hyderabad-Karnataka region lacks such vital socio-cultural organisations and democratic institutions to induce development and create consciousness among the people of the region. Except few privately managed educational institutions like the Hyderabad-Karnataka Educational Society, Sharan Basaveshwara Educational Society, Kharge’s Educational Institutions and other

\textsuperscript{11} Samyukta Karnataka, Hubli-Dharwad, June 23, 2000, p.4

\textsuperscript{12} The Bombay-Karnataka region was in the forefront in leading various social movements during the pre-unification period such as Home Rule Movement, Non Co-operation Movement as part of freedom struggle and unification movement. Besides, the Bombay-Karnataka region had the opportunity to hold the first Kannada State Political Conference in Dharwad in 1920, the Congress Session at Belgaum in 1924 which was presided over by Mahatma Gandhi, organisation of Hindustani Seva Dal, a voluntary corps with Hubli as its all-India headquarters by Hardikar Manjappa, Salt Satyagaraha at Ankola in 1930 etc, contributed the growth of political awakening in The Bombay-Karnataka. Furthermore, the role-played by British scholars such as Machenzie, B.L.Rice, J.F.Fleet, Kittel and Col. Mark Wilks etc in promoting kannada culture and spreading education was significant during the colonial North Karnataka. For more details on political and cultural awakening in The Bombay-Karnataka in colonial period, See A Hand book of Karnataka, edited by S.R. Honnalingiah, Gazetteer Department, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore, 2001, pp.35-66.
Muslim Educational Institutions managed by Kamrul Islam, the region has not endowed with vital institutions of the kind one would witness in the Bombay-Karnataka region. Hence, lack of strong and adequate development of public institutions and organisations in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region is one of the reasons for its backwardness. 37 per cent of the respondents attributed the backwardness of Hyderabad-Karnataka region to this factor.

Civil Society Response to Developmental Issues in North Karnataka

The role of civil society in promoting the culture of development and creation of awareness among the people of the region is well recognised. It is particularly important in inducing development in socio-economically backward regions. Men of letters, social scientists, journalists, academicians, lawyers, religious personalities, business organisations and public-spirited citizens are considered to be the significant segments of civil society. More particularly, the educated citizens of a region share the credit or blame for ensuring or failing to contribute to the development of the region respectively. In this regard, the people's apathy towards developmental issues and blind faith in the existing political order are cited as one of the major reasons for the poor social development in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. It is known from the fact that there have been no halt to the continued run for the political leadership as they have been winning elections without any difficulties. This kind of people's apathy coupled with poor educational status and economic condition have forced the people of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region to remain silent spectator to the persistent poor social development in their region.

In contrast, the vibrant civil society in the Bombay-Karnataka seems to have responded positively to the needs of their region and put pressure on people's representatives and the state government to initiate developmental activities in their region. As a result, the status of human capital in the Bombay-Karnataka region is strong and the people are development-oriented and conscious about social development. They are more educated and have been vocal in raising issues that concern the most to the development of people and their own region. The Kannada Kriya Samiti comprising enlightened persons in Dharwad is one such example, which has always been in the forefront to raise issues that are important to the welfare of the people and create awareness among the people of the Bombay-Karnataka region. The educated and well-informed citizens of the Bombay-Karnataka have been successful
in ensuring better deal for their region. This suggests that the vibrant civil society in the Bombay-Karnataka region has been successful in creating awareness among the people of their region and also ensured that the public institutions of governance deliver the expected outcomes.

The reasons cited for people's apathy, toleration and lack of fighting spirit among the people of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region pertain to historical legacy and the poor status of education and economic factors. The lawyers and journalists of the region share this view when they were asked about it. They cite the reason of not having any well-organised social movements in the region historically and people are used to sufferings and injustice. 39 per cent of the respondents in northern region of the state cite the above factor as one of the major reasons for the backwardness of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region.

**Poor Implementation of Developmental Programmes in North Karnataka**

Implementation of programmes meant for development of the backward regions in the state by institutions of governance is the most important aspect that forms the crux of developmental discourse. It is learnt during the fieldwork that one of the reasons for backwardness of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region is the poor implementation of developmental programmes in the region. The then North Karnataka Development Commissioner Mr. Chiranjeevi Singh attributes the prevailing regional imbalances in the state to the consistent laxity of the administrative machineries over decades. According to him, educational backwardness and lack of health care information and health care facilities in North Karnataka are the most prominent reasons for North Karnataka's backwardness. In fact, he suggested change the capital once in 10 years as it helps in maintaining balance between the regions.

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13 In an interview with Mr. D. Suresh, the leading lawyer in Raichur on October 4, 2005, feels that illiteracy, lack of awareness about developmental issues and mass leadership are the main reasons for people's apathy. He also indicated that people have lost faith in political movements as they thing nothing can be achieved out of it. Moreover, their poor economic condition has forced the common people to think about two square meals rather than what is happening at political level.

14 In an interview with Basavaraj Swamy, editor of Suddimoola, Kannada Daily in Raichur on October 4, 2005, it was found out that the people of the region have been tolerant and ignorant about the growing regional imbalances within North Karnataka historically. He accounts absence of social movements and lack of sincere efforts on the part of people's representatives and politico-administrative will as the main contributing factors for the poor rate of social development in the region. He also blamed the journalists for not raising and highlighting the developmental lags in the region. It is interesting to note that there are various local newspapers such as Kranti, Satyakama, Shasan, Chintaka, Samaj Vikas, Raichur Vani, Raichur Prabha etc have no records of publishing any news item on the prevailing poor status of social development in the region. This state of affairs has kept people unaware of the needs of their own region.
within the state. In fact, there have been special programmes for the development of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. To substantiate the above argument, the study has selected to examine and evaluate the role of the Hyderabad-Karnataka Area Development Board (HKADB) in inducing the required development in the region.

It is recalled here that the Dharam Singh Committee was constituted to recommend measures for tackling the problem of backwardness of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region in the 1980's. The committee, after examining all socio-economic and human development aspects in the region, and after visiting Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and North Eastern states to know the steps taken by them to deal with regional backwardness, recommended constituting a separate board to speed up developmental activities in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. Accordingly, the Hyderabad Karnataka Area Development Board Act 1991 was passed. This act provided for establishment of a development board for the entire Hyderabad Karnataka region to prepare annual plans and monitor and evaluate the implementation of its plans. Accordingly, the Hyderabad Karnataka Area development Board was constituted with a view to take up special developmental programmes in the region. The board was expected to take special measures to induce development in respect of social and economic infrastructure such as roads and bridges, health care, educational facilities, enhancing drinking water supply, providing minor irrigation, catering to animal husbandry, promoting sericulture, forestry and urban development. Presently, the HKDB comprises of 39 MLA constituencies covering all the five districts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region namely Gulbarga, Raichur, Bellary, Bidar and Koppal.

The HKADB as it stands today, is chaired by an elected member of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly, who should normally hail from the region, a secretary, who is a senior IAS officer of the Special Deputy Commissioner cadre, a Deputy Secretary, Controller of Finances and other staff at its organizational level in all add upto 52 members. The headquarters of the board is located in Gulbarga city.

15 To know more on Mr. Chiranjeev Singh’s views on regional imbalances in Karnataka, See Times of India, Bangalore, November 28, 2003. He stated Haveri district in the Bombay-Karnataka region as an ideal location for a new capital.

16 Plan for Backward Area Development, Gulbarga Division. Under Government order No. PD 4, PPB 80 dated, May 3,1980; A committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Dharam Singh.

The HKADB has been taking up developmental programmes in all the five districts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. But its progress and achievements have not been upto the expected level of development.

In terms of financial allocation, the Board has received Rs.696.58 crores since 1990-91 to 2004-05. In terms of sector-wise works, amount allotted and spent during 1990-2001 suggests that only 1.82 per cent and 10.77 per cent of the total works undertaken by the Board pertain to health care and education respectively. This clearly indicates the poor priority accorded to social development by the Board. It is significant to observe that 56.39 per cent of the works relates to construction of roads and bridges. Even in terms of money spent also, the share of social sector is very low. In an interview with the Deputy Secretary of the Board revealed the fact that the Board suffers from lack of adequate powers to initiate developmental activities as it is only allocating financial resources to the programmes designed by officials and people’s representatives external to the Board. The Board also suffers from inadequate resources and technical staff to plan and implement effectively. The High Power Committee for the Redressal of Regional Imbalances in Karnataka, Chaired by late, D.M.Nanjundappa has recommended for closing all the development boards in Karnataka including the HKADB. This speaks for inefficiency and poor implementation of developmental programmes by the HKADB. See Appendix II for sector wise money spent by the HKADB since 1991 to 2004-05. 58 per cent of the

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20 In an interview with the Deputy Secretary of HKADB on October 7, 2005, it was found out that the Board suffers from adequate delegation of powers as he revealed the fact that people’s representatives, local leaders and petty politicians of the region have forced the Board to allocate financial resources to the programmes of their own choice. He was of the opinion that they never support the legal factors, which has become difficult for the officials to direct the development process. It was also found out that the administrators appointed to man the Board is not academically oriented as an Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer was heading it at the time of fieldwork.
21 N Shivanna of Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), who studied the administrative aspect of an evaluation study of regional development boards in Karnataka opinions that although the Hyderabad-Karnataka Development Board (HKDB) was set up in order to address the problems of five districts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka, it has failed in delivering the intended results. He says, “It was indeed a tangible step taken by the Government for speedier development of the region. The local elected representatives had a major say in the implementation of works through this board. But, the HKDB has no history of having functioned effectively. “We in fact suggested that Zilla Panchayats could do a better job if the HKDB funds were given to them”. For more details, See Deccan Herald, Sunday Spotlight, Bangalore, June 25, 2000, p.3.
respondents have said that the corrupt bureaucracy has failed in inducing development in the region. They also view that the poor implementation of developmental programmes meant for the region by the bureaucracy is in nexus with the political leaders of the region.

The analysis and assessment provided so far regarding the factors and reasons for the backwardness of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region reveals the fact that the backwardness of the region is the outcome of the combination of various factors explained above. The factors that have differentiated the Hyderabad-Karnataka region from that of the Bombay-Karnataka region ranges from the historical legacies to unresponsive political leadership of the region: lack of adequate socio-cultural organisations, people's apathy towards developmental issues to poor implementation of developmental programmes in the region. However, among the politico-administrative factors mentioned above, the most crucial factor that has been the root cause of backwardness of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region in comparison with the Bombay-Karnataka region is the fact that relates to historical factors and failure on the part of people's representatives of the region. It is observed that the political leadership of the region and the successive state governments has continuously failed to ensure that the region makes strong in-roads into social development. It sounds illogical to attribute the backwardness of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region to historical legacy even after five decades of state formation.

The above argument gets strength if one looks from the point of view of the strong political presence in the region for quite a long time. It is also significant to note that they have had important positions in state governments. In the era of developmental planning, five decades is too long enough to correct whatever historical legacies could have contributed the backwardness of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. The study concludes this section with an argument that the Hyderabad-Karnataka region has remained backward despite having a strong political presence in the region, which was expected to induce much faster and people-centric development in the region. In this context, the issue of separate statehood for Uttara Karnataka including the Hyderabad-Karnataka region needs to be placed in a larger discourse that have significant implications for the future of the region. In this regard, it is very important to evaluate the occasional separatist movements within northern region of the state in detail so as to find out not only the genuinity of the movement.
but also to unravel the vested interests that are predominant in the whole issue of separatism. In this context, part two of this chapter makes an effort to evaluate the nascent separatist movements within parts of North Karnataka.

II

The bane of uneven development and dissatisfaction caused by the socioeconomic deprivation, particularly in northern districts of the state appears to have induced second thoughts on the very merits and validity of their long struggle by the leaders of North Karnataka for an enlarged state of Karnataka in 1956. The relative economic backwardness of North Karnataka has forced certain sections of the people to think that their betterment is not possible if northern regions continue to remain parts of the large state of Karnataka. These tendencies in northern parts of the state have recently gained momentum around certain symbols of grievances. Quite paradoxically such voices of separatism are being heard in a region, which had earlier championed the cause of unification of all Kannada speaking regions in 1956.

The geneses of separatist tendencies within northern region of the state are traced to its infant birth in Dharwad-Hubli region of the Bombay-Karnataka. It was at the first ever-cabinet meeting held outside the capital of Bangalore in Hubli in 1997, J.H.Patel, then Chief Minister of Karnataka declared that there is no regional imbalance as such in Karnataka. He also declared that the notion of regional imbalances is a myth. This statement led to the discontent among the people of North Karnataka and since then two occasional movements started gaining momentum in Dharwad of the Bombay-Karnataka and Gulbarga of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region.

The public resentment caused by the Chief Minister’s statement declaring regional imbalances in Karnataka is a myth received a counter explanation from the book published by H.K.Patil titled, “Beautiful Land of Karnataka: An Unfulfilled Dream”. H.K.Patil, the noted political leader of the Bombay-Karnataka, in his book, provided in depth analysis of regional imbalances between North and South Karnataka regions with the help of statistical data. This book helped the separatists to raise the issue of regional imbalances in a more concrete way.

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22 For more details on the genesis of separatist movement in Karnataka, See, Prajavani Deepavali Special Issue, 2005, p.122.
In the meantime, the then Chief Minister J.H. Patel took a decision in 1997 to bring out a human development report for the state to study levels of attainment in social development across the districts in Karnataka. In fact, the preparation of the report coincided with a growing demand from the northern districts for a larger share in the developmental pie. The publication of the HDR in 1999 not only helped the academicians and politicians from North Karnataka to raise the issue of regional imbalances within the state but also intended to help the government to identify the sectors in which backwardness is acute and design corrective measures to contain growing regional imbalances in the state.  

At this backdrop, the forces of separatism received support from the vested interest groups, as has been the case in a large and diverse country like India. It is to note that many studies in different states in India have revealed the fact that setbacks in development within large states provided enough political space for accumulation of regional discontent and feeling of deprivation. Most often, such feelings are exploited by powerful regional elites for fulfillment of their vested interests. These could be economic or political in nature. In fact, they take advantage of people's feelings and manufacture an ideology of sub-regionalism. The case of North Karnataka appears to be no different from the national scenario, as leaders of separatist movements within North Karnataka have capitalized on the genuine or perceived feelings of the people. In fact, they have used certain symbols of grievances to hold the movement together and allowed for public mobilizations in parts of North Karnataka. The crisis of poor social development within North Karnataka and subsequent movements for separate statehood in different parts of North Karnataka are not free from power politics. The growing separatism under the banner of Separate Statehood for Uttara Karnataka led by certain sections of the society in The Bombay-Karnataka needs to be examined in a larger context. Before

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23 In fact, the preparation of this report for all the districts in the state was necessitated only when the feeling of neglect and deprivation gained momentum in parts of the state. It attempted to identify the sectors in which these regions have remained backward. Besides, to undertake corrective measures vis-a-vis to reduce the feeling of depravation. The Human Development Report prepared for all districts of the state with the help of experts from within and outside the state has identified the backward regions, particularly in human development aspects. Besides, it has thrown light upon developmental disparities in the social sector such as access to basic amenities like health, education, drinking water, etc. Its findings have become an important source for not only evaluating the existing policies but also to evolve fresh policies for even development. Besides, it will help the researchers to explore various means and ways to correct regional imbalances and improve the standard of living.
understanding the larger context, it is significant to know about those symbols of grievances that have become instrumental in the hands of agitators. It is important to study these factors in order to know the direction, content and the very agenda of the separatist movement in North Karnataka.

Symbols of Grievances

As discussed earlier, certain symbols of grievances do dominate separatist movements irrespective of the fact that they are genuine, need based or perceived feelings of the people and certain issues manufactured by the leaders of the separatist movements within North Karnataka. But actually these symbols of grievances hold the movement together and allow for public mobilization around specific issues. In fact, these symbols of grievances are often, exploited by regional elite, who takes the benefit of people's feelings and manipulate both the extent and nature of the problem. Besides, they are useful in constructing an ideology of separatism and thus allow for public support. In a similar manner, the leaders of 'Uttar Karnataka', The Hyderabad­Karnataka and 'Kodagu' movements in Karnataka have mobilized people’s support around certain symbols of grievances such as delay in establishing a bench of Karnataka High Court and South-Western Railway Zone's headquarters in Hubli-Dharwad region, inordinate delay in completion of Upper Krishna Project (UKP), delay in sanctioning irrigation projects for North Karnataka, closure of Hubli Airport, Industrial sickness in northern regions of the state, Gauge conversion of Bijapur-Gadag railway line, establishing the regional offices of the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) and Food Corporation of India (FCI) and others.

These symbols of grievances in North Karnataka have attempted to pile on the agonies of the people of North Karnataka and created disillusionment and resentment in the minds of public. In fact, these symbols have been the long-standing grievances of the people of North Karnataka around which movements for separate statehood erupt from time to time. However, for the convenience of the study, we have identified three major symbols of grievances, which have gained public support in northern parts of the state of Karnataka. It is significant to observe that the state government has addressed these symbols of grievances very recently.
High-Court Bench

As the demand for separate statehood has gained momentum around certain symbols of grievances in North Karnataka, the case of establishing a bench of Karnataka High-Court presents a testimony to the emergence of mass mobilization. It is noteworthy that the demand for separate statehood has been preceded by the Lawyer's agitation for establishment of a separate Bench of the Karnataka High-Court in Hubli-Dharwad region of The Bombay-Karnataka and in Gulbarga of The Hyderabad-Karnataka region. The continued struggle of lawyers and subsequent failure of the state governments to fulfill their demand provided an opportunity to the leaders of separatist movement to raise an issue of separate statehood for Uttara Karnataka more forcefully. However, the issue of High-Court Bench in Karnataka has, often, been raised in the last three decades with regular intervals. The plea of a permanent bench at Hubli-Dharwad region and Gulbarga is being raised mainly on the ground of inconvenience and high expenses caused to the litigant public because of the long distance from these regions to Bangalore, where the High Court is located. In fact, under section 51[2] of the States Re-organisation Act.1956, the President, after consultation with the Governor and Chief Justice of the concerned High Court, can provide for establishment of one or more benches within a state.\textsuperscript{24} Accordingly, in many states like Maharashtra [Nagapur and Aurangabad], Tamilnadu [Madurai], Madhya Pradesh [Indore and Gwalior], West Bengal [Jalpaiguri], Uttar Pradesh [Allahabad and Lucknow] etc, have more than one High-Court Benches within their geographical areas. On similar lines, the people of North Karnataka have been demanding a permanent Bench for their region.

However, the demand for establishment of High Court Bench in northern region of the state has certain advantages. It would certainly help the poor litigant public of the region, as there has been good number of people making trips to Bangalore to seek justice. It is noteworthy that large number of cases are pending in Karnataka High Court. Since "Justice at the door of the litigants" has become the pronounced policy of the State, the establishment of High Court Bench would certainly help the poor to seek legal remedy at cheaper cost and reduce the time associated with the legal procedure. Besides, it would give some official status to the

\textsuperscript{24} Basavaprabhu Hosakeri, \textit{History of the Demand for High-Court Bench for North Karnataka}, Forum of High-Court Bench Agitation, Dharwad, 1999, p.5.
long neglected region. However, it is interesting to know why such demand has not been fulfilled. It is certainly due to two major reasons. One, the rejection of the demand by the successive committees appointed to look into the feasibility of establishing a bench away from the principal seat on the bases of the Jaswant Singh Commission guidelines. It was only the Honorable Justice Mr. D.M. Chandrashekhar, the then Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court favored to set up High Court Bench in northern region of the state in 1979. But it has continued remain a wishful dream.

It was again in 1999 the then Chief Justice, Mr. Bhaskar Rao, constituted a Five-Member Committee to study the demand only after the agitation gained momentum in Dharwad. The committee after through examination of the demand and meeting with the Bar Association of Dharwad, Gulbarga and other district bar associations came to the conclusion that the demand is neither feasible nor desirable. It cited the reasons that the demand does not fulfill the guidelines laid down by Jaswant Singh Commission.25 The second important reason for the long delay in establishing the bench in Northern region was the conflicting claims made over the location of the proposed bench within northern region of the state. The conflicting claims were made on behalf of Hubli-Dharwad, Bijapur, Bidar, Belgaum, Bellary, Gulbarga and Raichur. Eventually, the Bar Association of Gulbarga made it clear that it would prefer to go to Bangalore rather than to Belgaum or Hubli-Dharwad.26 Similarly, the Bar Association of Raichur also opposed the proposed High Court bench in Hubli-Dharwad as they declared that it would not serve the interests of the people of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. The association also demanded that the bench should be established in Raichur or any other place in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region such as Gulbarga.27 These conflicting claims and lack of consensus among the people of North Karnataka seriously destroyed the premises on which a permanent bench was sought in North Karnataka. This is very important to note that there is no unanimity among the people of North Karnataka as whole when it comes to the most prominent issues concerning to the betterment of northern region28.

In all, the delay in establishing the High Court bench in North Karnataka gave rise to certain serious questions in the public mind in terms of state's failure to complete some legal formalities and to decide the location in conjunction with the needs of the people in the region. In this regard, what has been coming in the way of completing certain procedural and legal formalities is getting the concurrence of the High Court. However, due to unknown reasons, the state has been soft padding the question of interacting with the Chief Justice of the High Court to convince him about the need for establishing the Bench in Northern Karnataka. However, the state's irresponsiveness to this demand could be seen in its refusal to exercise its powers vested with it. Under Section 17 of the Karnataka High Court Act 1884, the state Government in consultation with the Governor can notify Circuit Benches outside the principal seat. This would have certainly paved the way for establishment of a permanent bench in North Karnataka and reduce the grievances of the people to large extent. But still this demand has remained an unfulfilled one. However, in the recent past, when Dharam Singh became the Chief Minister of Karnataka, who hails from The Hyderabad-Karnataka region has laid foundation stone for two Circuit Benches at Dharwad and Gulbarga.

**South Western Railway Zone**

The issue of locating the headquarters of the newly carved out Southwest Railway Zone was yet another symbol of grievance that allowed public mobilization in northern region. The genesis of railway zonal headquarters, in fact, reveals the truth that it rightly belongs to the northern region of the state. According to the Government of India’s decision on 28th February 1999, it was decided to set up the zonal headquarters in Hubli, when seven new railway zones were created in India. In fact, way back in 1966, the Hubli region, which was reckoning for the status of zonal headquarters of the South Central zone, was lost to Secunderabad.

However, despite Hubli possessing the entire required infrastructure for setting up a railway headquarters, the issue was politicised for parochial interest. It was clear from the fact that Mr. H. D. Deve Gowda, the then Janata Dal state unit president organized an agitation in Hubli demanding the headquarters of the proposed zone to be located in Hubli prior to the 1994 assembly elections. When he became the Chief Minister of the state, he endorsed the same in a letter to the Government of India for

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29 *Deccan Herald*, Bangalore, June 17, 2000.
approval. Later, when he became the Prime Minister of India in June 1996, he changed his mind and sanctioned the headquarters to Bangalore and inaugurated the office there on November 1996, ignoring both the plea from the people of North Karnataka and the promise he made in this regard.\(^{30}\) It is noteworthy that he didn't offer any explanations as to why he changed his stand and preferred Bangalore to Hubli.

However, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which was in opposition, made this an election issue and subsequently, made plans to redeem the promise. The Karnataka State unit of the BJP sought the help of the Union Government that was headed by A. B. Vajpayee. The BJP government at the center, on the request of the BJP state unit, decided to shift the headquarters from Bangalore to Hubli. Accordingly, the Railway Ministry ordered the shifting of the headquarters, which was to be formally inaugurated by the Prime Minister A B Vajpayee during his visit to Hubli in May 1999.

In the meantime, Mr. Narayanaswamy, the ex-MP from Bangalore North constituency, who had promised for the retention of the zonal headquarters of the South Western Railway in Bangalore during his election campaign of 1996 Parliamentary elections, filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL). On the basis of the PIL, the Karnataka High Court squashed the Indian Government's decision to shift the headquarter from Bangalore to Hubli.\(^{31}\) However, this decision was considered as yet another blow to the aspirations of the people of North Karnataka. The long-standing demand of Southwest Railway Zone was rejected first by political leadership and then by the judiciary. In this regard, the state government did not file an appeal in the Supreme Court challenging the decision of the Karnataka High Court. Furthermore, the state government failed to take any adequate steps to establish an additional zonal headquarters in Hubli, which would have silenced the scale of grievances in the regions. But in the end, the railway headquarters was established in Hubli after a long struggle.\(^{32}\)

\(^{30}\) The Hindu, Bangalore, June 22, 2000.
\(^{31}\) The Indian Express, Bangalore, June 21, 2000.
\(^{32}\) To know more on the history and struggle for establishing headquarters at Hubli, See Basavaprabhu Hosakeri, A History of the Demand for High Court for North Karnataka, Published by the committee for establishing High Court Bench for north Karnataka, Dharwad, 1999. And also see U.L. Bhat, "Demand for High Court Bench in North Karnataka I and II, Deccan Herald, dated, June 29 and 30, 2000.

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These two issues of the High Court Bench and the South West Railway Zone headquarters involved central decision making on the one hand, and state's commitment on the other. Lack of commitment on the part of the state government has led to unhealthy competition between aspiring regions probably on parochial political interest. As far as the High Court Bench is concerned, despite its proven necessity, the state had failed to materialize the long-standing demand. In both cases, the justifiability of the viable proposition has never been appreciated by the state. In fact, any move in this connection was politically motivated and had been effectively thwarted due to various reasons. This once again proves that how the subversive attitude of the state government controlled by regional elites and the inaptitude of the political decision makers influence the direction of development process. In such situations, socio-economically weaker regions usually emerge as the real losers, no matter how genuine and need-based their demands are.

**Upper Krishna Project**

The long delay in completing the Upper Krishna Project (UKP) has raised umpteen doubts among the people of North Karnataka about the role of the state in providing irrigational facilities to the region. Its sluggish pace of execution served as a standing testimony in the absence of political will among all those who had wielded power during the last four and half decades in the state. The timely completion of UKP, which would make North Karnataka as the prosperous Punjab of Karnataka has been simmering since forty-five years. In fact, the foundation stone to the UKP was laid in 1963 with an aim to improve irrigational facilities in the regions and to reduce disparities between the north and south region in terms of irrigational potential. But it has been languishing under successive government notwithstanding the fact that a few of the chief ministers during this period hailed from northern parts of the state.

River Krishna, the lifeline of North Karnataka, takes birth at Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra and flows through Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Out of the total 2570 km basin area, Karnataka has the largest catchment area. In fact, out of the total area of 1,90,641 sq.km, 60 percent area comes under the Krishna basin. But, even one fourth of this catchment area has not been brought under irrigation. More than 52 projects have been on the backburner under the UKP project, which includes

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Narayanapur, Almatti Dam etc. This reveals the fact that the Malaprabha and the Ghataprabha projects have been delayed since fifty years. Such long delays have become financial burdens on the state exchequer as the total estimated cost of these projects shot up from Rs. 170 crore in 1950 to Rs. 1,760 crore in 2001.\textsuperscript{34} It is noteworthy that these two projects would put together irrigate about 5.5 Lakh hectares of area in northern districts of Belgaum, Bijapur and Dharwad.

However, it is important to note as to why these projects, which would irrigate larger areas of North Karnataka, particularly the districts of The Hyderabad-Karnataka region have been languishing over the decades. The major argument in the development discourse has most often, underscored the fact that there exist near or total absence of political will and commitment. Besides, there have been arguments of deliberate delay and discriminatory and step-motherly attitude of the state government. These arguments are sustained in the case of Karnataka as the state government has completed the Cauvery river basin in the southern part of the state under non-planned expenditure, which has as low as 20 percent of the area under irrigation. It appears to be true that similar enthusiasm lacked not only in finding resource for the UKP but also solving inter-state disputes on sharing of Krishna water.\textsuperscript{35} However, a renewed interest has been emerging in this project wherein the Supreme Court, acting on an original suit filed by Andhra Pradesh Government and Karnataka's Government's plea to allow it to raise the height of Almatti dam to 524m, partially granted Karnataka's plea and allowed it to raise the height to 519.6m.\textsuperscript{36} However, the lack of infrastructure such as canals, distributaries, feeders, field channels and laterals to utilize water for irrigation continues to be the major bottleneck. This has led to considerable disappointment among the people of North Karnataka who has not been able to utilize the available water resources. This is certainly a reflection of the state government's non-commitment to provide irrigational facilities for the common good.

These symbols of grievances, which were genuine and need-based, had once become instrumental in the hands of agitators to press their demand for separate statehood for northern region. In this context, the most pertinent question that one can ask is about the future direction of the movement as the state government in the recent

\textsuperscript{34} The Hindu, New Delhi, July 27,2001.
\textsuperscript{35} The Hindu, New Delhi, June 22,2000.
past has addressed these symbols of grievances at least to some extent. Furthermore, it also speaks for the failure of the movement to induce any remarkable change in northern region of the state, which had earlier based on few symbols of grievances. In this regard, it is necessary to examine the nature and content of the movement in northern region of the state.

Support Base of the Movement

The support base of the separatist movement has been very weak and limited in North Karnataka. It is only the lawyers' associations both in Dharwad and Gulbarga that have spearheaded the movement for separate Uttara Karnataka State, although in real terms, they want to ensure High Court Bench for their respective districts. The Committee for Development of North Karnataka in Dharwad headed by B.D.Hiremath, noted advocate and staunch fighter for High Court Bench for Hubli-Dharwad region has attempted to seek the support of civil society in the region.37 But the committee has not received any kind of support for creation of separate statehood for Uttara Karnataka state. In fact, the public-spirited personalities have rejected his call for a meeting to discuss the problems faced by North Karnataka, as this committee is known for separatism.38

The committee has found a lone supporter for two separate states within North Karnataka in G.M.Hegde, a noted advocate of the Bombay-Karnataka. But his views are based on administrative considerations and not were of political in nature. Similarly, in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, the support base of the movement is limited to lawyers and few politicians such as Vaijanath Patil, V.P., Hanumantha Rao Desai and Vishwanatha Reddy Mudnal. It was learnt during the fieldwork that these political leaders were known for highlighting developmental issues when they are out of power just to show that they are concerned about the development of the region. In fact, the criticisms seems that theirs target is the party in power rather than genuine

37 B.D. Hiremath, the president of Dharwad Bar Association, in a meeting of Dharwad Bar Association resolved to launch an indefinite agitation to demand separate statehood for North Karnataka. In an interview to the Asian Age on June 15, 2000 he said, "The very purpose of the organisation of the states is defeated over the years. Successive state governments, irrespective of political parties, who were in power, have failed to meet the demands of the northern region. Even after half-a-century, the region is still being treated with utter disrespect. So the meeting decided to launch an agitation till the demand for separate statehood is met. For more details, See The Asian Age, June 17, 2000, p.9.

38 For more details on this issue, see, Samuktya Karnataka, Kannada daily, Hubli, June 23, 2000, p.4
positive criticism. It was also observed that the same critics, when they have been in power, the criticisms have never translated into any concrete steps.

Furthermore, no single political party has come in open support to these separatist groups in Karnataka. They do not have any structured organisation for the sake of ensuring separate statehood for the region. Furthermore, they have not undertaken any activities other than occasional strikes and bandhs to convince the people of North Karnataka that the problem of regional imbalances is of greater extent and needs to be dealt with strong force.

Like political leadership, organs of civil society have also not extended their support to the separatist movement in North Karnataka. But they have underscored the fact that the region has lagged behind in all development indicators compared to what has been achieved in southern parts of the region. They are of the firm opinion that dividing the state into two is not a viable solution as remaining within the state can also solve the problem. In this regard, the literary personalities of North Karnataka have appealed to the leaders of the separatist movement not to press for separate statehood. Noted Kannada poet Channaveer Kanavi though underscored the fact that North Karnataka has been lagging behind in all-important sectors of the economy but rejected the demand for separate statehood. He also recalled all the pain and hard work that went into unification of Karnataka in 1956 and asked the agitators to demonstrate peacefully to press the government.39

Raghavendra Rao also rejected the demand for separate statehood for North Karnataka. He also recalled the great sacrifice and untiring efforts of then leaders of the unification movement in Dharwad. According to him, it is highly inadvisable to launch a movement for separate state in a place from where unification was achieved. He also blamed the political leadership of the region for not showing commitment in developing their region. B.C. Patil noted actor-turned politician went to the extent of calling the peoples representatives of the region to resign from their posts on moral grounds as they have failed to respond to the development needs of the region. B.C. Patil, who visited Dharwad in the wake ongoing protests for establishing High Court Bench in North Karnataka. He participated in the discussions held at the Karnataka

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39 In an interview with noted poet Channaveer Kanavi on October 23, 2005 in Dharwad expressed great commitment to work for united efforts for the development of North Karnataka. Channaveer Kanavi suggested implementation of the Nanjundappa Committee both in letter and spirit. He also said that the issue of regional imbalances should become a political issue during elections.
Vidya Vardhak Sangha and asked citizens to dedicate themselves for the betterment of their own region. He was of the opinion that the state government has continuously been treating the people of North-Karnataka with step-motherly attitude.  

D.M. Nanjundappa, a noted economist and former Vice-Chancellor of Karnataka University Dharwad and Bangalore University and Chairman of the High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances in Karnataka expressed concern over existing wide gap between North Karnataka and South Karnataka. He also called the elected representatives of the region to fight unitedly for the overall development of North Karnataka. He said, “If the Ministers, MPs, MLAs and MLCs have a political will for the development of the region, they should object passage of Budget demanding allotment of large chunk of money as mentioned in the report”. Similarly, Harnahalli Ramaswamy, the chairman of the Administrative Reforms Commission in Karnataka opposed the demand for separate state. He stated that he was speaking as a freedom fighter and one who had espoused the cause of unification of all the Kannada-speaking areas.

Gangu Bai Hangal, noted musician based in Hubli said, “I am basically a musician. I belong not only to Hubli, but also to the whole world. What kind of governance and from where it comes from North or South (Karnataka) that is immaterial to me, however it (governance) should strive for balanced development. As far as development is concerned, Hubli is only 10 per cent of Bangalore. This kind of gap and discrimination is cruel. I am not a politician nor a government official, it is for the decision makers to decide as to what kind of development is needed for North Karnataka. High Court Bench, Railway Zone, Passport Office, etc are a tip of the developmental iceberg. More is needed and the people in Bangalore know that”.

Patil Puttappa, the president of the Karnataka Vidya Vardhak Sangha cautioned the leaders of separatist movement in Dharwad not to raise the voices of separatism. He was of the firm opinion that separate statehood cannot be achieved without the consensus of all people of North Karnataka. His statement clearly

41 See Vijaya Times, October 14, 2003 for Prof.D.M.Nanjundappa’s views on this issue. He did not support for separate statehood for North Karnataka in his report. He suggested administrative decentralisation to improve backward regions in the state.
42 The Hindu, June 24, 2000.
reflects on the trends in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, which have not only declined to support separate North Karnataka state but have also launched their own movement for creation of Hyderabad-Karnataka State. He also highlighted on the fact that there exist no harmony and understanding among the MLAs and MPs of North Karnataka region, which has resulted in neglect of development in this region.

**Agenda of the Separatists**

The agenda of the separatist movements in northern region of the state is limited and narrow in focus. The very issue of poor social development in North Karnataka discussed in the last two chapters finds no mention on the agenda of the separatist movement. In fact, most of the separatists do not know the importance of social development. When they were asked about the issues on the agenda, social development figured at the bottom of the list. This suggests that their understanding of social development was very weak both conceptually and theoretically. They have not done any concrete and independent research on the status of social development in the region. They merely rely on data produced by newspapers and government sources. Besides, they do not have any comparative analysis of the status of development in different regions of state, which have been the victims of such problems and the so-called historical legacies.

In reality, these movements have gained momentum on a single agenda of ensuring High Court Bench in Dharwad-Hubli region though it is not mentioned explicitly. Issues concerning poor status of education, health, sanitation, drinking water facilities and irrigation facilities for North Karnataka are not part of the agenda of the separatist movement in North Karnataka. This suggests that the issues on the agenda of the separatists are limited to the fulfillment of certain issues in which their personal interests are prominent than the overall development of the region. It is significant to observe that acquiring political power for themselves seems to be the main plank of the separatists and petty politicians of both the Bombay-Karnataka and the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. In this regard, the most pertinent question that needs to be answered what is the future direction and agenda of the movement as the state government has fulfilled all the symbols of grievances raised by them. Now the leaders are issue less and lack direction to keep the movement alive.
Response of Major Political Parties in Karnataka

The growing separatist movements within northern region of the state have not received open support from any of the major political parties in Karnataka. In fact, no single political party has supported the demand for separate statehood for Uttara Karnataka region. It is significant to observe that the very issue of developmental lags within north Karnataka has not been part of the election manifesto and political agenda of any political parties in Karnataka. The issue has not been debated in greater deal during elections. It is interesting to note as to why the major political parties in Karnataka have not politicised this very issue of regional imbalances during elections.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has always favored creation of smaller states, has been very careful in the case of Karnataka and chooses not to support the demand for creation of separate Uttara Karnataka state. This may be due to its strong support base among the socio-economically and politically dominant communities such as Lingayats and Brahmans in both the Hyderabad-Karnataka and southern region of the state. The BJP seems to have had apprehensions of losing its support base in North Karnataka if they take their traditional stand of supporting smaller states. The core consideration for the BJP to take such a position is not ideological but purely based on its electoral prospects. It is evident from its stand to support the demand for the establishment of a Bench of the Karnataka High Court and location of the headquarters of the South-Western Railway Zone in Hubli while disapproving the move for a separate North Karnataka state. 45

Similarly, the Congress Party also has not supported the demand for separate statehood for North Karnataka. It is significant to know as to why the Congress Party in Karnataka has not supported the cause of separatism. It may be because of the fact that the Congress Party was in power for quite a long period, i.e., from 1956 to 1983 and from 1989 to 1999 before the separatist tendencies gained momentum in the state. If Congress party supports the cause of separatism and negligence on the part of people’s representatives openly, it is nothing but self-criticism. It would also imply that the Congress party has been responsible for the perpetuation of regional imbalances in Karnataka or failed to strive for the development of backward regions in the state. In this regard, it is significant know to the views of Mr. H.K. Patil, the

45 To know the views of Mr. B.S.Yediyurappa, the president of state unit of BJP on the separatist tendencies in Karnataka, See The Hindu, June 22, 2000.
leading congress politician and minister from the Bombay-Karnataka region. He charged the then J.H. Patel government for having refused to acknowledge till the last that North Karnataka had been neglected. He said that even though a Cabinet meeting was held in Hubli with that end in view, no action was taken. In contrast, H.K. Patil said, it was the Congress (I) government under the leadership of Mr. S.M. Krishna, which acknowledged the fact that the region is backward and initiated several steps to correct regional imbalances in the state.\(^{46}\) Besides, the leaders of Congress Party deny the argument that it is the Congress Party, which hold the state power for many years and thus responsible for the current status of North Karnataka. Instead they place the blame on corrupt bureaucracy and people’s apathy towards developmental issues.\(^{47}\) However, the statement made by H.K. Patil seems to be blaming the Janata Dal government but he hesitates to mention that it was the Congress government which ruled the state of Karnataka for more than 35 years.

The erstwhile Janata Parivar (the present splinter groups such as JD(U), JD(S), AIPJD etc), which appeared on the political scene of Karnataka in the 1980’s as an anti-Congress force. Janata Parivar, which was a large social combination of different social categories, attempted to give a new direction to the development process as they had wide range of socio-economic issues in their agenda prior to coming to power in Karnataka. They held the reins of government in two spells i.e., from 1983 to 1989 and from 1994 to 1999. During this period, backward regions expected a lot from this political front. But this Janata Parivar also failed to deliver the expected outcomes. In fact, now the Janata Parivar is known for internal divisions and has been divided into many splinter political groupings under the leadership of former Prime Minister H.D.Devegowda, Siddaramaiah and S.R.Bommai etc. Some of the leaders of these groups have tried to highlight the developmental problems of North Karnataka for their personal gains and attempted to make political in-roads into northern region of the state. It appears to be a political game plan rather than genuine development of the region. In fact, some of the leaders have attempted to thwart the direction of developmental process in northern region of the state.

\(^{46}\) _The Hindu_, Bangalore, June 26,2000, p.4.

\(^{47}\) During interaction with Congress workers at district level in Dharwad, Gulbarga and Raichur, it was found out that they share the view that the Congress Party is not responsible for poor status of social development in northern regions of the state. They cite historical factors coupled with inefficient bureaucracy and people’s apathy are the factors responsible for regional imbalances within North Karnataka.
All the major political parties in Karnataka have failed to politicise the very issue of regional imbalances in Karnataka during elections. Although parties like BJP and JD(S) have attempted make inroads into the northern region of the state in the last Lok Sabha and state assembly elections in 2004, but it was not on the plank of developmental issues. This suggests the poor response of the major political parties towards development of backward regions in the state, as it is not part of their political agenda.

However, the above explanation of the separatist movement and its support base brings certain facts to light. It was observed during fieldwork that the present discontent and agitations on the basis of the perceived or genuine neglect by the state has transformed into occasional movements for separate statehood for their respective regions within North Karnataka. Local leaders have always led such movements. Even in Karnataka, the members of Dharwad Bar Association and Gulbarga Bar Association have initiated the movement that has particularly gained momentum when state government failed to establish a High Court Bench in the region.

However, the nascent separatist movement in the northern parts of the state has been quite different to other movements in India. The separatist movement in North Karnataka, based on the persistent uneven development and state's failure to address the grievances, could be termed as a bargaining force rather than a separatist movement. The movement clearly lacks the backing of public at large. Although the vested interests groups may be stroking the fires of separatism, the general public and academic community has remained non-committed to the cause of division of the state. In fact, they have been more sympathetic to the neglect of North Karnataka. Though voices of separatism were raised, they have been the weapons to make the state open its eyes to the problems of the region.

However, majority of the public opinion in Karnataka emphasizes on the problems of North Karnataka region by highlighting that it has not received its due, but they were firm to point out that the demand for separate statehood would not solve

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48 For more details on electoral shifts and trends in the last Lok Sabha and state assembly elections in 2004, see, Muzaffar Assadi, "Karnataka Elections: Shifts, New Trends and the Congress Defeat", Economic and Political Weekly, September 18, 2004,pp.4221-4228. The in-depth analysis provided on election results underlines the performance of major political parties in different regions of Karnataka. It is significant to note that the BJP has made serious inroads in The Bombay-Karnataka and the Congress has lost heavily in The Hyderabad-Karnataka region in the last assembly elections in 2004.
the problem. This actually underlines the need for administrative decentralization in the northern districts of the state. This demand for more decentralization for the respective regions within North Karnataka has taken the shape of agitations. But these agitations are not translated into a mass movement wherein small forums such as 'Forum for North Karnataka Development' in Hubli, 'The Hyderabad-Karnataka Janandolana Kendra' (HKJK) in Gulbarga, have been leading the agitations. However, these agitations have been seasonal, issue-based and place-centric. The Dharwad-centric agitation, which gained momentum particularly after the state's failure to establish a High Court Bench in Dharwad-Hubli region, unfurled a green, white and blue flag of the new "Uttar Karnataka State" on June 21, 2000. They also unveiled a map of separate state comprising twelve districts of North Karnataka on the occasion. However, it is noteworthy that such important decision of the birth of a new state was taken without consulting the representatives of the other districts in the region. It was learnt that the Gulbarga Bar Association categorically rejected the demand for a separate state comprising the North Karnataka districts suggested by the Dharwad Bar Association. The Gulbarga Bar Association President, Mr. Subhas L. Konin, said that the declaration of a separate state including the districts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region was the unilateral decision of a few people in Hubli-Dharwad and was not binding on the people of Gulbarga district.

Similarly, the Gulbarga-centric agitation, which also wants to draw the attention of the state in initiating developmental activities for the region, gained momentum under the leadership of Vaijanath Patil, the Janata Dal leader, who quit the Ramakrishna Hegde ministry protesting the neglect of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. Subsequently, the flag of new Hyderabad-Karnataka State was hoisted by

49 Dr. Mahadevappa, Vice-Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad accepts the fact that North-Karnataka is neglected but opposes the demand for Separate state. He suggested that administrative decentralisation would solve the problem. Mr. Alexander Peter, a small scale industrialist and a social worker in Bijapur noted the disparities within North-Karnataka. Dr.N.S.Patil, an academician supports the demand for separate state as he felt that the state government has turned deaf ear to the pleas of North-Karnataka. etc. See Deccan Herald, Bangalore, June 25, 2000 and Sudha, the Kannada Weekly, Bangalore July 6, 2000 for peoples views and espouses to the emerging separatist movement in North-Karnataka.

50 The Hindu, New Delhi, June 22, 2000.

51 The Hindu, Bangalore, June 23, 2000. He criticised the Dharwad Bar Association for publishing a map showing the Hyderabad-Karnataka as coming under the separate state. He said, "No sane person will demand a separate State just because a Bench of the Karnataka High Court was denied to a particular district". Significantly, the Gulbarga Bar Association took a decision to distance itself from the decision of the Dharwad Bar Association demanding a separate North Karnataka state.
the veteran freedom fighter Vidyadhara Guruji on November 1, 2001, the day of Karnataka Rajyotsava. The new red flag was unveiled which has the map of the new state comprising of Gulbarga, Raichur, Bidar, Bellary and Koppal. This, however, shows that the small and geographically dispersed agitations with few linkages with each other have not come together into one large movement.

The two parallel movements demanding separate statehood for the respective regions within North Karnataka clearly reflects the lack of coordination among the people. This however, could not give rise to form a political party of its own to press the demand for the separate state. In fact, these movements did not have a popular and strong leader to lead the movement. It is noteworthy that unlike the movement in North Karnataka, the movements in the other parts of the country have established their own political organizations. Sometimes, they have succeeded in forming separate states such as Jharkand, Uttaranchal and Chattisgarh. Even in the long drawn Telengana movement, The Telengana Praja Samithi (TPS), the Jharkand Mukti Morcha (JMM), the erstwhile Jharkand Movement (JM), Chattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM) in the erstwhile Chattisgarh Movement, Maha Sangharsha Samithi in Vidarba, Kosal Mukti Morcha in Orissa, Assam Gana Parishat (AGP) in Assam, to some extent, were all politically motivated the people and contested elections to press their respective demands.

In contrast, the backwardness of northern region in the state has not been politicised in the state and no major political parties have supported the movement demanding a separate statehood for North Karnataka. However, the best example for the politicization of the backwardness was the occasion of the 12th Lok Sabha elections. The Bellary constituency in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region was the battleground between the AICC president Smt. Sonia Gandhi and the BJP's Smt. Sushma Swaraj. The latter attributed the acute backwardness of the region to the failure of Congress MPs who had been elected from the region. Incidentally, after the elections, a special package of Rs. 3,900 crores was sanctioned as a gratitude to the voters for electing Smt. Sonia Gandhi particularly to nullify the argument of Smt. Sushma Swaraj. Such measures clearly reflect the extent of politicization when nothing was made available for the neighboring district of Raichur that has remained

the most backward district in the state. In fact, one could see this issue as how sheer politics influences developmental decisions in India. However, the nascent separatist movements in northern region of the state can be termed as agitations for more decentralisation and autonomy for their respective regions. It is also interesting to note a similar separatist tendency is noticed in the Coorg district of the state based on ethnic identity and socio-economic deprivation.

Separatist Movement in Coorg

The separatist movement in Coorg (Kodagu) presents a different scenario as compared to the two parallel movements in the northern parts of the state. This demand has been voiced out more vociferously since 1927 despite Kodagu performing comparatively better than any other region in the state in terms of both major sectors of the economy and human development aspects. Although the demand on the face of it sounds ludicrous, it is not easy to deny the fact that it has been an offshoot of the sense of neglect and alienation among the Kodavas. The major feeling that seems to have turned the ground fertile for the growth of fissiparous forces is the fact that developmental activities in the region are not in proportion to the revenue earned from this region. The region has contributed more than 40 percent to the foreign exchange that India earned in 1996-97. In turn, the state government has spent only 10 crores on its development where the region has pumped around Rs. 600 crores income to the state exchequer in the form of Income Tax.\(^54\)

Such an aspect of neglect by the state helps to advance an argument like "prosperity with depravation" in the discourse of development. It is clear from the fact that despite Kodagu ranking second in the per capita income (Figure 1), securing high literacy rate, being the largest coffee producer in India, continues to suffer from basic infrastructure for human development. There is no single law college, medical, dental, engineering colleges and a university in this region.\(^55\) Besides, the region has been denied the benefit of Cauvery water even though the river Cauvery takes birth at Talacauvery in Kodagu. Apart from these lacuna, the developmental activities undertaken by the state in the region have been entirely in contrast to the traditional values of the people and harmful to the environment and ecology of the region. Such

\(^55\) Ibid, p.3115.
activities include plywood activities, construction of dams, arrack distilleries and red light area resorts and atomic energy plants, resulting in flourishing of slums due to influx of outsiders. Moreover, the state government, instead of decentralizing some government offices to this region, has actually shifted major offices out of this region.

In protest against these developmental activities, the Kodagu Rajya Mukti Morcha (KRMM) has been leading the movement for separate statehood since its birth in 1991. Initially, it was known as Liberation Warriors of Kodagu State (LIWAKS). These groups have organized Kodagu Sahitya Academy to herald the cause of separatist movement in the region. In this regard, the leaders of the movement have launched a 'concept of pushing programme" as a strategy of the movement, which envisages to make the political stalwarts of the region and the state to appreciate the reason and the need for the emergence of the new Kodagu state in the historic "Madikeri Declaration" (1996).

Nevertheless, separatist movement in Kodagu could not be understood merely in terms of the long history of underdevelopment of the region but also as a part of the contradictions promoted by the activities of the state government in the name of development. In other words, it combines the meta-narratives of its unique cultural history and the Lilliputian status symbol as a Part C state, which it enjoyed before its merger with the then Mysore state in 1956. Along with these, the region has been exploited, deprived by both the outsiders and the state that has become the base of the movement for a separate state. As a result, the members of the Coorg National Council (CNC) observed many satyagrahas to press the central government to accord the status of a Union Territory.

56 "Kodagu Desha", Madikere, November 21, 1997, p.4. It is interesting to note that Haragi Rehabilitation's divisional office, the Kodige Milk Dairy, Office of the Land Acquisition Department -all have been shifted out of Kodagu region.


58 The Hindu, New Delhi, January 27, 2001. Mr. N.U. Nachappa, Secretary-General of the CNC, who led the satyagraha told that the district had been ignored by the successive state governments in terms of development. Separation from Karnataka was the only answer to end the problems of the districts. In fact, the CNC laid stress on protecting the interests of the minority Kodava community and endeavoring for the inclusion of the Kodava language in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution of India and to retain the special rights being enjoyed by the Kodavas for centuries.
Response of the State Government

Unlike in other separatist movements in India, the nascent separatist movements in parts of North Karnataka have drawn the quick attention of the state government of Karnataka. Although the successive state governments have failed to contain the growing uneven developments, the state's efforts in the late 90s have underscored the need for developing infrastructure for both economic growth and human development. The successful experimentation of democratic decentralization through Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) has addressed the problems at the grass-root level. The political stability under one-party rule at the state and the able political leadership with vision and holistic approaches, particularly in the late 1990s has resulted in significant development in the state. In this regard, it is necessary to know how the state government has responded to the agitations of separate statehood in parts of North Karnataka. Consequently, the state government has formulated various policy formulations to reduce regional imbalances within the state. In this regard, it has set up an apex body to evolve strategies and to monitor the progress made by different regions in the state. However, various committees, commissions are being constituted for the task along with undertaking developmental activities in the state. In this regard, the following details provide brief summary of state initiatives:

Constitution of Hyderabad-Karnataka Area Development Board (HKADB)

The Dharam Singh Committee was constituted to recommend measures for tackling the problem of backwardness of The Hyderabad-Karnataka region.59 The committee, after examining all socio-economic and human development aspects in the region, and after visiting Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and North East States to know the steps taken by them to deal with regional backwardness, recommended constituting a separate Board to speed up developmental activities in The Hyderabad-Karnataka region. Accordingly, the Hyderabad Karnataka Area Development Board Act 1991 was passed. This act provided for establishment of a Development Board for the entire Hyderabad Karnataka region to prepare annual

59 Plan for Backward Area Development, Gulbarga Division. Under Government order No.PD 4,PPB 80 dated, May 3,1980; a committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Dharam Singh.
plans and monitor and evaluate the implementation of its plans. Accordingly, the Hyderabad Karnataka Area development Board was constituted with a view to take up special developmental programmes in the regions. The Board as it stands today, is chaired by an elected member of the Legislature who hails from the region, a secretary, who is a senior IAS officer of the Special Deputy Commissioner cadre, a Deputy secretary, Controller of Finances and other staff at its organizational level in all add upto 52 members. The headquarters of the Board is located in Gulbarga city. The HKADB has been taking up developmental programmes in the five districts of the regions. However, the Board has been suffering from inadequate resources and technical staff to plan and implement effectively. In spite of these problems, the Board has achieved considerable progress in the last one decade of it’s functioning.

Preparation of Human Development Report 1999

Another important state initiative as a response to separatist tendencies was the preparation of the Human development Report in 1999. The credit for preparing the human development report for Karnataka for the first time goes to the then Janata Dal government led by late J.H. Patel. It was the second HDR prepared by an Indian state after Madhya Pradesh. In fact, the preparation of this report for all the districts in the state was necessitated only when the feeling of neglect and deprivation gained momentum in parts of the state. It attempted to identify the sectors in which these regions have remained backward. Besides, to undertake corrective measures vis-a-vis to reduce the feeling of depravation. The Human Development Report prepared for all districts of the state with the help of experts from within and outside the state has identified the backward regions, particularly in human development aspects. Besides, it has thrown light upon developmental disparities in the social sector such as access to basic amenities like health, education, drinking water, etc. Its findings have become an important source for not only evaluating the existing policies but also to evolve fresh policies for even development. Besides, it will help the researchers to explore various means and ways to correct regional imbalances and improve the standard of living.

Constitution of a High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances

Recognizing the growing tendencies of separatism on the basis of uneven development in the state: the present state government constituted a High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances in the State under the chairmanship of the former Union minister and noted economist Prof. Y. K. Alagh, to recommend measures to correct regional imbalances in the state. However, owing to preoccupations, Prof. Alagh could not take up the work. Therefore, the state government again constituted the new committee under the chairmanship of the former deputy chairman of the State Planning Board, Prof. D. M. Nanjundappa. The committee conducted extensive tours of the state and has identified backwardness within the state using 36 indicators.

In its final report, the committee has identified 114 taluks (out of 175) in the state as backward. Although the committee has highlighted that the backwardness is not confined to North Karnataka, it has accepted the fact that backwardness is more acute in North Karnataka. Accordingly, the committee has recommended for a permanent Bench of the Karnataka High Court in Hubli and a Circuit Bench in Gulbarga, and an Indian Institute of Technology in Dharwad, a Central University in Gulbarga, a Veterinary Science University in Bidar, developing Gulbarga and Belgaum on the lines of Mysore and Bangalore, establishing Engineering Skills Finetuning and Application Centres in Belgaum and Gulbarga, one time grant of Rs. 20 crore each to medical colleges in Hubli and Bellary, double guarantee scheme promising education and employment to people from backward areas.

The committee also broadly suggested measures to improve literacy, health, primary education and infrastructure. In terms of financial allocation, the committee recommended that the state government should allocate Rs. 1350 crore as equalization grants to correct imbalances in Karnataka. It also recommended posting an officer to overlook implementation of all recommendations. The committee has also asked the state government to resort to Article 371 of the Indian Constitution and declare

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61 The Committee after 14 months of extensive study submitted its report on April 26, 2002. It has proposed a Plan outlay of Rs.18000 crore in a period of 8 years. Deccan Herald, Bangalore, April 28, 2002. The committee looked into the issue from the human development index angle, which included primary education, illiteracy, poverty, health, credit flow etc. Unlike other reports, the Nanjundappa committee went into the task of taluk-wise assessment and recommended to take up taluk-wise approach to eradicate the imbalance.
various regions of the state as most backward, more backward, and backward on the lines of neighboring Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Apart from these committees and reports, the state government under S. M. Krishna's leadership, who came to power on October 11, 1999 has actually resorted to administrative decentralization in the state. The major areas recognized for administrative decentralization are education, transport, tourism, and human entrepreneurship. Such initiatives in the state have silenced the agitating voices and these models of decentralization and autonomy has become most significant steps. It is worthwhile to give details of such decentralized model that has recently emerged in the state with a special on Northern Karnataka.

Decentralized Education System

The State of Karnataka has established a separate "North-East Education Development Directorate" for the seven backward districts of North Karnataka. It is a special education package to improve school infrastructure and enrolment rate and to reduce the school dropouts' rate in northern region of the state. Under the jurisdiction of this separate directorate all the five districts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region and two districts Bagalkot and Bijapur of the Bombay-Karnataka region have been clubbed for the implementation of this programme, which aims to improve literacy rate and reduce school dropouts rate. 62

The establishment of North-East Education Development Directorate for the seven northern districts is expected to improve the much required enrollment rate and reduce the school dropouts' rate as it provides necessary infrastructure in the region. In another gesture as part of the special education package, the state government has introduced Rs.40 crore Mid-Day Meal Programme in all the government schools in the same seven districts of the integrated areas of the state. The state government has also prepared a blue print on removing the disparities in education and improving infrastructure in schools, which includes Eleven Goals for the task. 63

63 Eleven Goals of Education Task includes improving access to schools, ensuring cent percent enrolment and 90 percent retention, reducing the drop-out rate to 5 percent, inclusion of school drop-outs in the mainstream schooling in a phased manner, removing injustice to SC and ST children, ensuring gender equality, preventing fake attendance, achieving optimum pupil-teacher ratio, improving infrastructure, providing adequate teaching and learning materials and improving the quality of education through training.
Decentralised Transport System

The transport system has undergone significant changes during the late 1990s in the state. With the fillip to give emphasis to improve transport system in the northern districts, the state government has decentralized the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) into three corporations. The North-East Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NEKRTC) was established in Gulbarga as its headquarters on August 15, 2002. Earlier, the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) was carved out from the Bangalore Transport Service (BTS) on August 15, 1997 and the North-West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWRTC) on November 1, 1997 with its headquarters in Hubli. This initiative has been considered as a milestone in the development of transport network in northern districts of the state, particularly in the districts of the Hyderabad Karnataka region. This step expected to usher an all round development in backward areas of the state with the advent of new industries, besides other economic activities flowing through the region.

Boost to Irrigation

Considering the irrigational potential of northern region, the state government has undertaken speedy implementation of irrigational projects pertaining to North Karnataka region. Apart from giving thrust to the Upper Krishna Project, the state government has recently dedicated to the nation the Rs.157 crore Hirehalla project at Mudlapur village in Koppal taluk of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. This project would help to irrigate about 20,000 acres in the drought-prone areas of about 20 villages of Koppal taluk in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. Besides, the state government has recently initiated adequate measures to tap the irrigational potential in Bidar district, which is one of the most drought-prone areas in the state. The long-pending Karanja project has received sufficient funds of Rs.40 crore from the state in its budget of 2001-02. The completion of Karanja project would irrigate 35,614 hectares of land. The state has also sanctioned four barrages across the Manjra River. Besides, the state government has continuously been discussing with the neighboring state of Goa regarding the Mahadayi river project that would provide drinking water.

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64 "Resurgent Karnataka Reaps a Rich Harvest" Hindustan Times, New Delhi, October 14, 2001, p.1-4.
65 The Hindu, New Delhi, Bangalore, December 27, 2001.
to Dharwad, Belgaum districts of the Bombay-Karnataka region. In this way, considerable emphasis has been placed on tapping irrigational potential in the region.

**Thrust on Tourism**

Similarly, the state government finalised Rs.104 crore projects for North Karnataka to tap the growing tourist potential in the region. However, it is noteworthy that these steps were taken after a fortnight of the unfurling of the flag of “New Uttara Karnataka State” in the northern region. However, these projects envisage setting up two tourist complexes at Gadag and Bhuntanalu village in Bijapur of the Bombay-Karnataka region. A heritage village at Kudala Samgama in Bagalkot district of the Bombay-Karnataka region has been initiated on a 100 acres land. Besides, four-star hotels were sanctioned to each at Belgaum and Hospet and three star hotels at Badami, Hospet, Gulbarga and Bidar. This proposed hotel projects are expected to make North Karnataka an attractive destination for foreign and domestic tourists.67

Apart from these initiatives, the state cabinet took a decision to form the Hampi Development Authority. It is important to note that the decision was necessitated only when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) deleted Hampi from the list of world heritage sites based on poor status of infrastructural facilities. This speaks for the poor infrastructure and basic amenities for the tourists in these sites. The proposed authority is expected to clear off all the encroachments and construction of janata houses near the major monuments. It is also hoped that the authority would work in terms of providing good transport facilities and basic amenities for tourists.68

**Agro Summit 2002**

In order to identify reasons for the stagnation of agricultural production of food crops, the state government convened the first ever high-level summit at Dharwad on February 7, 2002, which is popularly known as Agro Summit 2002. The summit called for a new direction to the policy of agriculture and allied activities in the light of emerging dynamic scenario of a highly competitive world after liberalization, privatization, and globalization (LPG) of the socio-economic order. The *Dharwad Declaration*, which was issued after the Agro Summit 2002, also focused on

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67 *The Hindu*, New Delhi, July 8, 2000, p.6.  
new directions of agriculture including research and adoption of new technology. It stressed for setting up water user societies, Farmers' knowledge and contact centers in the state. As a follow-up to Agro Summit 2002, the state government constituted Karnataka Agricultural Commission to identify measures to bridge the gap between the actual and the possible yields in the ten-agro zones of the state.69

'Mahiti' - A New Paradigm of Development

The Karnataka state, which has been in the forefront of Information Technology (IT), has of late, attempted to extend IT and IT-enabled services to rural people. It has actually led to the growth of a new paradigm of development in the state. In this regard, the state has worked out a policy to integrate with the requirements of the common man, especially in rural areas. Accordingly, the Millennium IT Policy popularly known as Mahiti was formulated in early 2000. The policy seeks to utilize IT in the overall growth of state power in empowering women, eradicating poverty, effective reduction of unemployment by providing employment to educated youth in IT industry, use of e-governance as a tool and delivery system, etc. As a first step, the state government has installed computers in 1000 rural schools for training in IT.70

Besides, integrating IT with school curriculum, the state government has extended IT facilities to rural masses, which is a significant development in the state, particularly the computerization of land records. The newly developed Bhoomi Software provides for printed land records as and when required and it also has the facility of online updating. Such land records kiosks have been set up in every taluk office from where the landowners can get a copy of land records. This measure has not only helped to get quick services, but also reduced the quantum of corruption and misappropriation of land records.

Implementation of D.M. Nanjundappa Committee's Recommendations

The present Mr. N. Dharam Singh led coalition government has shown commitment to redress regional imbalances in the state. As a first step, the government has implemented few of the recommendations of D.M. Nanjundappa Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances in Karnataka. In fact, some of the major recommendations of the D.M. Nanjundappa Committee have already been implemented in the recent past. Accordingly, the present state government of Karnataka has established the Veterinary and Animal Husbandry University at Bidar, the first ever Women's University in Karnataka at Bijapur and laid foundation stone for High Court Circuit Benches in Dharwad and Gulbarga in September 2005.

In addition to these positive and significant developments, the state government of Karnataka has been committed to promote human resource development in a bid to provide adequate skilled labour in Northern Karnataka. The government tool room and training center has established sub-centers in parts of the state like Gulbarga and Bellary districts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region and Dandeli district of the Bombay-Karnataka region and projects in Hubli and Harihar are in the pipeline. The Center for Development of Entrepreneurship has been operating from Dharwad to promote entrepreneurship.

To sum up, the mass mobilization around certain symbols of grievances, particularly in northern districts of the state presents an altogether a different scenario. In fact, it is proved beyond doubt that the nascent demand for separate statehood in parts of Karnataka is actually the movement for administrative decentralisation and development. The most significant outcome of the movement is its ability to draw the attention of the state government to its genuine and need based grievances. In this regard, it appears that the agitators have actually geared its strength towards asking for more decentralisation and development for their region.

The state government, in response to the emerging separatist tendencies in parts of the state has recently initiated series of developmental activities in backward regions of the state, particularly under S.M. Krishna's leadership. These developmental activities involve administrative decentralisation along with giving thrust to major sectors of the economy and aspects of social development. In addition, the state government has extended Information Technology to rural sectors by effectively
training the rural youth and hence building their entrepreneurial capacities. It is noteworthy that "The Mahiti", the new development paradigm has brought the common man into the mainstream development process. In his way, the recent initiatives taken up by the Government of Karnataka goes well with the renewed debate of development that recognizes social development as central to the concept of development. In this regard, the state government of Karnataka has recognised the fact that the human development is an indicator of its progress and proves that it is intending to correct the false programmes adopted by the previous state governments.

In fact, under the quite of new economic policy since 1990s, the state has trends of withdrawing itself even from the social sector also. As a result, the public sector institutions are in the situation of severe resource crunch. The educational and health budgets have actually turned out to be salary-budgets with little money for plan and capital account spending. This situation requires very active involvement of the state in the social sector by increasing the budgets to this sector along with radical overhauling of the public policy by decentralisation of the decision making process to ensure the participation of the people. The state must cut down its ever increasing and already higher level of non-developmental expenditure in order to strengthen the social sector infrastructure. The policy makers must realise that only by upgrading the quality of human resources through the medium of education and health sector improvements the state can maintain its place in the next century, i.e. the century of knowledge.