

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MYSORE STATE: EARLY 20TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture in Karnataka is a key component of the state's economy. The geography of Karnataka, including its soil and climate, strongly favors agricultural practices in the state. Most of Karnataka's residents are involved in farming, particularly in the countryside. The expansion of Commercial and Horticulture in the state has an exciting historical narrative, showcasing numerous intriguing facts, significant accomplishments, and proud legacies. While certain horticultural crops have been cultivated in the state for centuries, their commercial cultivation began only two and a half centuries ago. The primary recognition for the beginning of horticulture crop cultivation in the state undoubtedly belongs to Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. Around 1760, Hyder Ali initiated a small royal garden close to Bangalore Fort, known as Lalbagh. Following him, Tipu Sultan enhanced this garden by creating organized designs and implementing an extensive planting initiative. He gathered numerous significant native and foreign types of flowers, fruits, vegetables, and other plants sourced from distant locations like Malacca, Isle of France, Oman, Arabia, Persia, Turkey, Zanzibar, France, and various European nations. In Srirangapatna, his capital, he created another renowned garden with the same name as Lalbagh, where he also incorporated various ornamental and horticultural plants. He had created a large Fig orchard at Ganjam, close to Srirangapatna. Many fruit species that Tipu Sultan introduced eventually evolved into the commercial crops of the Mysore province at that time.

Keywords: Commercial scale, Mysore state, Commercial and Horticulture crops, Promoting, Giving boost, Colonial policy

INTRODUCTION

In Karnataka, researchers have focused more on the economic factors of agriculture, including the production of agricultural raw materials, market expansion, and the development of a state-driven agricultural economy, while paying less attention to the agricultural history of the region. Among the researchers who have examined Karnataka's political economy, their central argument emphasizes the necessity of analyzing historical or colonial policies to thoroughly address the current agricultural situation in the state.

Following the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799, the English acquired Lalbagh, which is believed to have been owned by military botanist Major Waugh, remaining in his ownership until 1819. He then presented this garden to Marques Warren Hastings, the Governor General of the East India Company, who subsequently designated Dr. Wallich, the Superintendent of the Royal Botanical Garden in Calcutta, as the Deputy Superintendent in charge of the Lalbagh Botanical Gardens. This setup persisted until 1831. Following the British takeover of Mysore in 1831, Lalbagh came under the control of Sir Mark Cubbon, the Chief Commissioner of the province. In 1839, the management of the Lalbagh Botanical Gardens was handed over to the Agri-Horticultural Society, Calcutta. The Society disbanded in 1842, and the Garden was once more overseen by the Chief Commissioner until 1856.

In August 1856, Lalbagh was established as the Government Botanical Garden, becoming fully a government entity. A committee consisting of the Secretary to the Commissioner, the Superintendent of Bangalore Division, and Dr. Kirkpatrick was formed to implement actions for preserving all the notable botanical species and enhancing the garden's appeal. Significant efforts were made over the subsequent two years. In 1858, after a gap of two years, Sir William Hooker, the Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, appointed Mr. William New as the Superintendent of the Lalbagh Botanical Garden.

The actual development activities in Lalbagh commenced in 1874, when John Cameron assumed responsibility for the garden. During his time in office, there was a robust and methodical establishment and growth of the garden. Lalbagh grew from its initial size of 45 acres to 100 acres by the end of the 19th century. The famous Glass House was built during his era in 1889. John Cameron is undoubtedly credited with initiating the commercial cultivation of various fruits, vegetables, and plantation crops. His extended tenure from 1874 to 1908 is considered the 'Golden Era' of plant introductions at Lalbagh.

In 1908, G.H. Krumbiegal took over the responsibility of Lalbagh. He created remarkable projects in Lalbagh and Mysore State. Similar to his predecessor, he introduced various plant species, such as the Rome Beauty Apple. He enhanced Lalbagh with numerous native and exotic species and significantly promoted the development of parks and gardens in Bangalore and Mysore cities, including the renowned Brindavan Gardens at the Krishnarajasagara reservoir, close to Mysore. In 1912, he founded the Mysore Horticulture Society, which organized regular Flower Shows at Lalbagh through this society. He additionally established the Bureau of Economic Plants and the Horticulture Training School. He dedicated 25 memorable years to the Department before retiring in the year 1932. In 1932, H.C. Javaraya assumed responsibility for Lalbagh and the Horticulture Development in the Mysore state. He received his training at the Royal Botanical Garden in Kew, London. He initiated the comprehensive advancement of Horticulture in the state. The creation of the Fruit Research Station in Hesarghatta, Bangalore, in 1938, enabled him to carry out numerous adaptive research experiments concerning different fruit varieties. The initial Horticulture farm was established in Maddur in 1942 to showcase the growing of Horticulture crops and the production of vegetable seeds and planting materials for farmers. He concluded his service in 1944.

Following Javaraya, K. Nanjappa assumed responsibility for the development of Lalbagh and the Department of Horticulture, continuing the legacy established by his predecessors while implementing various developmental projects. When Dr. M.H. Marigowda assumed the role of Superintendent of Horticulture in Mysore in 1951, the state's development projects commenced at an extraordinary speed. In 1963, following the establishment of the independent Department of Horticulture, he was promoted to the role of Director of Horticulture. Multiple programs previously managed by the Agriculture Department were shifted to this newly established Department.

In 1965, the Department underwent reorganization, resulting in the creation of several positions to continue the work of Horticulture development in the state. Additionally, numerous new plans were approved. In 1956, due to the reorganization of the state, horticultural activities expanded to cover all 19 districts.

During his term, he took the Horticulture to the rural areas and to the common man. He set into implementation of an unique pattern of Horticulture development i.e, **“4-Limbed Model of Horticulture”**. To suit to this, he established the Horticulture Produce Co-operative Marketing Society and the Nurserymen's Co-operative Society at Bangalore. He started as many as 357 farms

and nurseries all over the state. His visualization of the farms and nurseries was in developing them as progeny orchards, nursery centers and places of demonstration of new crops and technology to the farmers. Seed testing, soil testing and plant protection laboratories were started at Lalbagh by him. Several park and gardens were laid out in different cities and towns of the state.

The area of Lalbagh Botanical Garden was expanded to 240 acres and planted with additional native and exotic species of plants during his period. Dr. Marigowda was a staunch advocator of **Dry Land Horticulture** and the principals and practices of these technologies were demonstrated in most of the farms started by him. This inspired the farmers of the state to practice Dry Land Horticulture on vast dry and drought prone tracts of the state. Mixed cropping and intercroppings got special fillip during his times. Thus, through multifarious achievements and feats, the state of Karnataka became the “**Horticultural State of India**”, and Dr. Marigowda’s name became immortal in the annals of Horticulture development in Karnataka.

Horticulture is a significant and upcoming sector in Karnataka. Horticulture has proved to be the best diversification option for agricultural land use, because of assured and the remunerative returns to the farmers. The Department of Horticulture is responsible for the overall development of Horticulture in the state. The Department is adopting a definite policy for the development of Horticulture, covering the following mandate.

- ✚ Area expansion under Horticulture crops based on agro-climatic suitability.
- ✚ Production and distribution of quality planting materials of various Horticultural plants.
- ✚ Dissemination of advanced Horticultural technology.
- ✚ Giving boost to dry land horticulture.
- ✚ Helping the farmers to achieve water economy through special irrigation techniques.
- ✚ Promoting hi-tech horticulture.
- ✚ Assisting the farmers in availing credit assistance.
- ✚ Organizing effective plant protection programmes.
- ✚ Providing post harvest and marketing assistance.
- ✚ Encouraging Organic cultivation methods.
- ✚ Helping the farmers in value addition and export of Horticultural produce
- ✚ Achieving high degree of human resource development. (HRD)
- ✚ Providing support to the research organizations, especially to solve the burning field problems faced by the farmers.

COMMERCIAL CROPS

Sugarcane, cotton, tobacco, mulberry. Oilseeds-groundnut, ningerseed, sesame, sunflower etc. Plantation crops coffee, coconut, arecanut, rubber, banana etc. In addition to these, different types of horticultural crops and floriculture are there. Agriculture is one of the most important aspects of the Karnataka economy. Karnataka's topography, such as its soil and climate, lends itself well to agricultural pursuits. Crop production employs the bulk of Karnataka's population, particularly in rural areas. Karnataka agriculture occupies approximately 12.31 million hectares, accounting for 64.6% of the total area. The main agricultural season in Karnataka is the monsoon, as the irrigated area accounts

for only 26.5% of the total cultivated land area. Karnataka also has great potential for horticultural production, ranking second in India in this regard. Karnataka agriculture is implementing important development plans and strategies to achieve greater productivity, which to a large extent adds value to the economy of Karnataka.

Sugarcane:

Sugarcane is the most important commercial and industrial crop in Karnataka. Karnataka ranks fourth in sugarcane production. It contains sucrose, which is used to produce sugar. As an annual crop, sugarcane requires irrigation facilities. Belagavi is the main sugarcane producing area in Karnataka, followed by Bagalkot, Ballari, Mysuru, Mandya, Davanagere, Shivamogga, Hassan, Koppal, Vijayapura, Bidar and Haveri as important sugarcane producing areas.

Cotton:

Cotton is a fiber crop. It provides raw materials for cotton textiles. In addition, it is also used to make carpets, beds and pillows. Edible oil is produced from cotton seeds. Cotton seed cake is used for animal feed. The major cotton producing districts of Karnataka are Dharwad, Haveri, Ballari, Mysuru, Kalaburagi, Raichur, Davanagere, Belagavi, Koppal and Vijayapura. Among these, Haveri ranks first in cotton production in the state. Dharwad District ranks second.

Tobacco:

Tobacco belongs to the genus *Nicotiana*. It contains an intoxicating substance called nicotine. Tobacco is used to make bidis, cigarettes, cigars, and snuff. The Portuguese introduced tobacco to India in the 17th century. Subsequently, people began to cultivate it in Karnataka. Currently, it is the main cash crop in the state. Karnataka ranks fourth among the tobacco producing states of India. The Mysore region ranks first in tobacco production.

Coffee:

Coffee is a famous beverage crop and plantation. Karnataka ranks first in Indian coffee production. Karnataka produces two types of coffee, namely Arabica coffee and Robusta coffee. Among them, Arabica coffee is of good quality and is in great demand in the international market. Coffee is mainly grown in the Kodagu area.

In India, development as a discourse is still deep-rooted in colonialism. The colonial policies had made major impact on the post-colonial expansions, and development of different sectors in the context of India. Therefore, the discussion of historical, colonial policies to post-colonial development policy-programmes in agriculture such as land reforms, institutionalized cooperatives to more recent organicfarming policy initiatives are phenomenal contributions to the Karnataka agriculture.

These initiatives are discussed here, to provide an overview about the Karnataka state agricultural and developmental discourses. The new economic policy, social transformation and shift in state agricultural perspectives have brought changes in social, political and cultural life, which created a gap within the state agriculture development.

Next section gives a political background for Karnataka. During the colonial period, it was known as Princely State of Mysore and after independence, the region came to be called as Mysore state and later renamed as Karnataka. The transformation from Princely Mysore to Karnataka was important in the political history of the state.

Therefore, this chapter maps the historical roots of agricultural development from colonial Mysore Kingdom and analyse different state led policy-programmes from post independent Mysore to present-day Karnataka. It has narrated in the subsequent four sections. The first section is on, Agricultural Policy Development under the Maharaja of Mysore (1900-1947). During this time, the state experienced transformation in infrastructure, irrigation facility and introduction of cooperative movement under the

Maharaja and his Dewans, contributed towards the creation of Modern Mysore. Last section discusses the colonial agricultural policy on land tenure from Dakshina Kannada.

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

The third segment of the chapter focuses on Karnataka Agriculture Development from New Economic Reforms to State Agriculture Policy (1990-2006). This section highlights the agricultural policy shifts that have taken place in the past 15 years in Karnataka. The last section is on my field location, Dakshina Kannada.

CONCLUSION

The agrarian records on cropping and landholding patterns, taxation and revenue assessments have become significant in social science research, while analysing political economy of the region. In the Indian context, the agricultural history is mostly available in archives written in the context of colonial administration. The archives provide a glimpse into agrarian past and politics introduced by the British government for the expansion and development of different agricultural crops and commodities. Many British officials comprehensively recorded socio-economic, political, cultural and religious beliefs and practices and gave special recognition for writing down in detail the agricultural crops, practices and approaches of the farming community in India. However, these archives do not provide rich narratives of agrarian past, in the native voice.

Therefore, the Indian history particularly the agrarian past, traditional knowledge and farming practices were incomplete without the strong historical native perspectives, which is now lost forever in the history. The disciplines like history, political science, culture and folklore have attempted to analyse agricultural past of the country, contributed books, monographs and engaged in agrarian historical studies from colonial and native perspectives. 1 The discussion of agrarian history in policy studies have enhance the discourses and connects different state led agriculture policies and programmes that are now embedded in everyday life of the farmers and farming.

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