

**AGRARIAN MOVEMENT IN KARNATAKA :
A STUDY OF THE RYTHA SANGHA 1980-85**

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dedicated to:

Bhavajan

Achae bhai

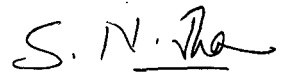
DECLARATION

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled "AGRARIAN MOVEMENT IN KARNATAKA : A STUDY OF THE RYTHA SANGHA 1980-85", submitted by Mr. Muzaffar Hussein Assadi in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other University. This is entirely his own work.

We recommend this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



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PREFACE

PREFACE

Peasants in recent years have started agitations and movements which are the manifestation of the shifting balance of power and profit in the agrarian structure , for the domination of a particular class. The real issues confronting the lower strata of the peasantry have been under one or the other pretext sabotaged during the course of the agrarian movements so as to keep the movement under control and protect the class character of the movement. The agrarian movement in Karnataka, which exploded during the early 1980s, was "hijacked" by the Rytha Sangha from the Malaprabha Co-ordination Committee. In reality the peasant movement under the Rytha Sangha leadership has been distinct for two reasons: i) it has covered the majority of the districts; and ii) it has cut across the barrier of caste and unified the caste dominated agrarian population. The distinct nature of the agrarian movement poses the questions like why peasant movement exploded in 1980s and not in 1970s? What was their class nature? Which were **the classes that** led the movement? Who and what were the driving forces? How the movement sustained itself despite the fact that there was a division within the movement. An enquiry into these questions requires an

understanding and analysing the emergence of the rich peasantry and its role in the movement of the early 1980s. However, a further analysis of these features is linked with the agrarian structure and the New Technology introduced in Karnataka.

When the study was undertaken, the first and the foremost problem confronted was that of translating the news paper reports and books published in Kannada into English. Many people helped me in this endeavour. In fact my association with the Rytha Sangha goes back to the time of the formation of the "Rytha Vidhyarthi Okkuta" in the Mangalore University in 1984. The optimism of the Rytha Sangha of becoming a revolutionary force, however, soon faded away with the exposition of its class nature and its proclivity to become a political party through the backdoor so as to retain its social and agrarian structure. When my interest in the Rytha Sangha was shaping, it was Dr. Sudha Pai, Assistant Professor, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, who kindled in me the interest by constant encouragement through useful discussions. I am very much indebted to her.

Many teachers and friends helped me by sending the relevant materials at their disposal such as news paper

reports, thesis and articles . Mr. Bhavani Shanker, my teacher at St. Mary's College, Shirva, collected the "Lankesh Patrike" of the past five years by different ways. His constant encouragement to me in taking up the rural problems , supporting me intellectually are the real backbonees of this study.

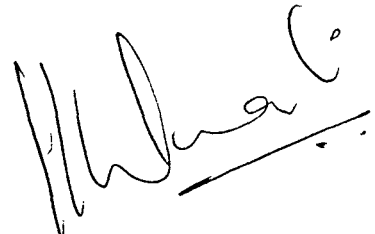
Mr. Rajashekar, an authority on the Kagodu : SatyaGraha , Krishnarajulu of the Gulbarga University, Purushottama Bilimale of the Mangalore University, Ksheerasagar of the Centre for Informal Educationa and Development Studies Bangalore, Thangavelu, a scholar in the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University and others have sent their written materials. I am very much grateful to them for their courtesy and their help.

I shall be failing in my task if I do not mention the Editors of the Prajavani and the Deccan Herald of Bangalore, the Library Staff of the Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Teen Murthy for giving permission to consult books and materials in their libraries.

My duty will not over without mentioning Mr. Appanna, office secretary, the Rytha Sangha who helped me to "locate" the materials in the "Dustbin" of the Rytha Sangha office in Shimoga , Henry Dias friend .

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Finally my whole efforts go ^{to} the credit of my brothers- Dr.Ashfaq, Sajjadh, Ejaz- and sister- Farahath for their constant cencouragement and financial assistance throughout my stay at JNU.



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CHAPTER I

PEASANT CLASSES, CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, AND AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS

CHAPTER I

PEASANT CLASSES, CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, AND AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS

Peasantry, a significant category in the history of the agrarian structure has been analysed from two different perspectives: one perspective sees it as a conservative force and another as a revolutionary force. Its conservatism is considered to emanate from its indifference towards any social change, being bogged down in traditional values. The argument is put forward that it is capable of becoming a "Class in itself" but not a "Class for itself".¹ Another argument runs that the peasantry is not only an "awkward class but also a typical class"². However, revolutionary potentiality of the peasantry is recognised in recent times. It can put up a show of resistance, effect innovations and change and at the same time play the role of revolutionaries in such a way that "no force however, great will be able to hold it back"³. Historical instances of the peasantry in China, Algeria, Vietnam, Russia, Cuba etc. prove the revolutionary role that it played against the imperialist forces, feudal lords and the even the state itself.

There are differences among the agrarian economists

and political scientists on the use of the term "peasantry" in their writings. These differences on defining the concept of the "peasantry" among the scholars in recent years arise due to the ambiguities inherent in the use of the term and a partial understanding of the historical role played by the peasantry. The term "peasant" literally means worker on the land. Some writers have employed the term peasant to characterise the whole agrarian society. Others have dealt with the term peasant as a part within the whole society.⁴ Some writers club peasant groups of cultivators with the class of landlords, others refer it to landless peasantry only.⁵ However, there is a broad agreement that all the "rural cultivators of low economic and political status should be included in the concept the "peasantry".⁶ On this basis the entire theoretical models of the agrarian societies are being built. However, this generalisation does not clear the ambiguities about the existence of the different categories of the rural population, about their differentiation in terms of their land holdings particularly in the context of the persistence of colonial, semi-colonial, semi-feudal and semi-capitalist nature of the developing societies.

Eric Wolf's definition of the peasants' as "population that are existentially involved in cultivation

and make autonomous decisions regarding the process of cultivation?" excludes business farmers including the plantation owners. But it encompasses the tenants, share croppers as well as owner operator, so long as they are in a position to make relevant decisions on how their crops should be grown. If one sticks to the orthodox definition of Eric Wolf's a class of peasants and share croppers should automatically be excluded from the categories of the peasantry because they are not privileged with the right of independent decision making.⁸

A more restricted definition also is given by Teodor Shanin. According to him peasantry, "consists of small agricultural producers who, with the help of simple equipment and the labour of their families produce mainly for their own consumption and for the fulfilment of obligations to the holders of political and economic power!"⁹ He clarifies the definition by stating that such definition implies specific ties of relations to the land, the peasant family farm and the peasant village community as the basic units of social structure, a specific occupational structure and particular influence of the past history and specific pattern of development.

Irfan Habib's definition of the peasantry excludes hiring in and hiring out of labour. He defines the peasant

as "a person who undertakes agriculture on his own, working with his own implements of his family",¹⁰ that is, an independent peasant exercising his right in the land free from the influence of the landlords. In other words, he sees the peasant in the modern term of "free peasantry".

However, it is difficult to include all categories of the rural population in the definition of the peasantry. There are rural people like farmers and landless labourers who are quite distinct from the peasant category. For example, the farmer exploits alternative uses of the factors of production in search of maximising return and is subjected to minimum risk. On the other hand except the rich peasantry other categories of peasantry keep the market competition at arms length, always struggling due to subsistence economy and operate in a restricted and product market.¹¹ Changes from the peasantry to the farmer includes not only a shift from the psychological orientation of the peasantry but also an institutional change within which men take their choices.

The agricultural labourers living in the villages can be included in the category of the peasantry for reason that they are an integral part of the rural society and their involvement in the development of land, its allied production is as important a matter to them as those

who own and cultivate the land. The land constitutes a common denominator and any change whether social, economic or technological will affect both the owner cultivator and the agricultural labourers.¹²

The landless labourers are distinct from the peasantry in that the proletariat are psychologically, culturally and behaviourally different from the peasantry. The interests of the landless labourers are various and conflict with the interests with the the peasantry. They prefer standardised wages, maximum work weeks, adequate medical and educational services, increased purchasing power and similar benefits.¹³ In spite of the conflicting interests of these two classes the landless labourers are linked with the "peasantry" since they are still unorganised and are dominated by the peasantry.

Therefore their history forms a part of peasant history also.¹⁴

However, the general categorisation of the "peasantry " to include all classes of differentiated peasantry negates the theory of homogeneity of the peasantry. Differentiation in the land holdings and the means of production in rural side divided the peasantry into different economic classes. However, it proves elusive to identify the exact position of a class with the

general category of the peasantry.

Engels, Lenin and Mao studied and differentiated the peasantry from the point of view of the then existing objective conditions. Engels' classification of the peasantry into the big and small¹⁵ peasantry exclude the system of means of production. His classification included the classes of feudal peasants, the tenant farmers, poor peasants and farm labourers who respectively perform "corvee" service to the landlord, payment of higher rents to the landlords, cultivation and owning of little patches of land and became natural allies of the industrial workers!¹⁶

Lenin classified the peasantry into five- the middle and rich peasantry, small peasantry, agricultural proletariat and semi proletariat. The agricultural labourers who were included in the category of the agrarian proletariat were identified as those living on hiring out their labour. The semi proletariat defined as those holding small patches of land partly were dependent on working as wage labourers and partly working on their rented plots. Small peasants were tenants holding tiny plots who do not hire out their labour for cultivation. The big peasantry, a category of capitalist entrepreneurs usually employ considerable labour. Lenin considered

that the big land owners, the erstwhile feudal lords employed systematic means of exploiting wage labour. In between the proletariat and the rich peasantry, Lenin pointed out the existence of the middle peasantry, a self supporting oscillating category that would in due course be pushed to become either the rich peasantry or reduced to proletariat.¹⁷

Mao's classification was based on historical situation in China and showed four categories: landlord, middle peasants, poor peasants and workers. He did not use the category of capitalist peasants in his categorisation because that was rather weak in China. The landlord was according to Mao, a semi entrepreneur who exploits the others by extracting rent. The rich peasant's exploitation was systematised by the hiring of labour and it would act as semi entrepreneurial class as well. The middle peasants, Mao considered, usually did not exploit others, but well-to-do middle peasants did exploit though exploitation was not their main source of income. The poor peasants sold part of their labour power and were subjected to the exploitation through rent and interests on loans. The workers included in the category of farm labour lived on hiring out of their labour.¹⁸

Hamza Alavi classifies the peasantry into the three categories. These are poor peasants, middle peasants, capitalist farmers or rich peasants. The poor peasants include tenants, share croppers who work on the lands of the landlord and who possess no land of their own. The middle peasants are classified as self sufficient and did not possess any excess land which could create or add to their subsistence. But Alavi argues that they do not exploit labourers nor do they become a prey to exploitation. On the other hand, he feels that the capitalist or the rich peasants possess substantial amount of land and their farming is based on the exploitation of wage labourers. They also participate in the farm work. ¹⁹ However, in this classification there is a problem of overlapping and actual categorisation is not clear, for, the peasantry is not involved in one mode of production.

In India the complexities of the agrarian society makes the demarcation further more difficult. The members of status groups like caste belong to different classes while the others in terms of their relations to the means of production belong to the same class. For example, Brahmins, Lingayaths, Okkaligas belonged not only to the upper castes but also to the land owning

class also.

A.R.Desai, a Marxist scholar, in his recent study of the peasant struggles in the post independence era divides the rural classes on the basis of the ownership of lands.²⁰ In India, he argues that farmers and landlords owning 15 acres and more have control over 15 percent of the total land. The middle farmers own between 5 and 15 acres of land and control 30 percent of the total land. The poor farmers who have the control over 17 percent of the land own between 1 and 5 acres of land. Infact, they are deficit farmers. Agricultural labourers owning less than 1 acre of land control 2 percent of the total land.

However, Utsa Patnaik, a scholar concerned with the agrarian structure feels that land holding is not a satisfying criterion for identification of classes in the rural side. Factors like size, composition of the family, the cropping pattern, intensity of cultivation the level of technology at which labour is combined other means of production, according to her, affect the yield potentiality on different kinds of lands. She attempts to develop an empirical criterion on the basis of labour exploitation index which suggests the use of hiring in and hiring out of labour that related

to the use of family labour. She points out two types of employment of labour viz, direct hiring of labour and indirect appropriation of others' labour through leasing out land for rent.²¹ This classification has, however, omitted the forms of exploitation by the method of usury and market forces. She, however, characterised the various classes based on the classification adopted by Mao and adds to it the category of capitalist farmers derived from Lenin's classification.²²

Daniel Thorner an eminent agrarian scholar on the Indian peasantry uses different criteria to differentiate the peasantry. They are ²³:

- 1) Income obtained from the soil :a) cultivation
b) wages
- 2) Nature of rights :a) property
b) ownership
c) tenancy with varying degrees of tenurial security
d) share cropping
e) absence of rights at all
- 3) Extent of cultivation actually performed :a) absentee landlord
b) partial work

- c) the magnitude of total work performed by cultivator with family labour,
- d) dependence on wages.

On the basis of actual amount of labour contributed towards the production process and pattern of sharing the produce, Thorner divides the rural people into three broad categories : Malik, Kisan, and Mazdoor. Maliks consist of large absentee landlords and small proprietors who exploit the rents of tenants, sub-tenants or share croppers. Kisans consist of small land owners or substantial tenants having property interest in the land and their holding supported their family above the subsistence level. Mazdoors, include poor tenants, landless labourers and share-croppers. They are dependent upon others for their livelihood and received their income either in cash or in kind.²⁴

Dalip.S. Swamy differentiate the rural population of India on the basis of control and ownership of means of production and classifies into four broad categories.²⁵ They are : the landless labourers, poor peasants, small peasants and the well-to-do peasants or the rich peasantry. The landless labourers are defined as those who depend on agriculture either as day labourers or as permanent labourers or share-croppers and own no land of their own.

However, some of them may possess a pair of bullocks. In India they comprised about 27 per cent of the total rural house holds owning 5 per cent of total cattle, 3 per cent of buffaloes, 22 per cent of wooden and iron ploughs. The poor peasants who consist of small tenants and share-croppers hold tiny patches of lands upto 2.5 acres. Non-economical holdings compel the holders to do day labour which in turn is determined by the size of the households, the type of land owned (dry or wet), the crop intensity, seasonal rainfalls etc. The agricultural labourers and the poor peasants who constitute 60 per cent of rural households, put together cultivate 9 per cent of land area, and use 15 per cent of irrigated facilities, own 14 per cent of cattle, 16 per cent of buffaloes, 10 per cent wooden ploughs and 7 per cent of farm ploughs and 2 per cent of electric pumps. The small peasantry, the third category, is self-sufficient, whose land holdings range from 2.5 per cent of the total households, cultivate 37 per cent of the total land, employ 43 per cent of total farm workers and use 36 per cent of irrigation facilities, possess 50 per cent of the healthy cattle heads, 45 per cent of the buffaloes, 57 per cent of wooden ploughs, 47 per cent of iron ploughs, and 35 per cent of electric pumps.

The well-to-do or the rich peasantry whose land holdings are 10 acres and above constitute 10 percent or rural households, possess 36 percent of buffaloes, 47 percent of cattle wealth, 62 percent of the total agricultural machinery, 50 percent equipment and their share of wooden and iron ploughs is 33 percent and 45 percent respectively.²⁶

In fact, the heterogeneity and the differentiation among the peasantry is marked in the wide socio-economic structure. This is one of the reasons stated for the peasantry to become an easy prey to suppression and exploitation. There are scholars who believe that the peasantry does not possess an independent revolutionary potentiality or capacity to challenge the exploiting class or the system of exploitation.

In its historical setting, Marx optimistically identifies the peasantry as becoming an ally of the industrial proletariat in the making of the revolution since he believes that the peasantry would not itself become a revolutionary due to the socio-economic forces at work in its midst.²⁷

But Engels' understandings of peasantry goes near to that of Marx. He holds the view that the differentiation of land holdings affects the revolutionary

potentiality of the peasantry. But among the different classes of the peasantry according to Engels, farm labourers are the most natural allies of the industrial class. In reality, the salvation of the peasantry lies in the leadership of the proletariat for the reasons that the peasantry is internally split, unorganised and petti-bourgeoise in out look.²⁸

But the experience of the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 proves that the peasantry can become an ally of the "urban workers", that is, the working class in the factories and join the "vanguard" of the revolution.²⁹

However, Mao saw the revolutionary potentiality of the peasantry in the course of overthrowing the Nationalist Government of Kuomintang. Despite the fact that China was a semi-feudal and semi-colonial and in the absence of a strong industrial working class, Mao's analysis of revolution began by assigning an important role to the peasantry. However, he felt that during the course of revolution the peasantry should be rightly indoctrinated and directed so that they could play a decisive role.

Also in its historical setting the peasantry in India as well can be said to be potentially

revolutionary and is not like a "sack of potatoes". Though these have not effected major revolutionary changes there is still a sign of emergence of decisive peasant action³⁰. While examing the kinds of social structure and historical circumstances that have produced or inhibited peasant revolution, Barrington Moore Jr. argues that "the revolutionary potentiality among the Indian peasants has remained largely unused."³¹ Moore singles out three factors that have pacified the peasant revolutions in India. They are caste system, strength of bourgeoisie leadership, and past influences of Gandhi on the peasantry. Caste system has devided the society into many segments and prevented the possible solidarity between the peasants of different castes on class basis. This caste linkages is exploited to thwart the consciousness of the peasantry towards a radical change in the system. Even the bourgeoisie by taking over the protective and judicial functions of the rural side, has weakened the link between the elite and peasants and thereby absolutely suppress the prospects of peasants becoming a revolutionary force in India.³²

Despite these drawbacks scholars like Katherleen Gough and Irfan Habib argue that the

Indian peasants do have the revolutionary potentiality. From the period of Mughal rule upto 1970s Kathleen Gough has estimated seventy seven peasant revolts in different parts of India.³³ On this basis it is argued that caste was not a barrier to peasant revolt. Irfan Habib pointed out two social forces working among the peasants that helps to foster peasant struggles. They are caste and class forces. He pointed out many instances of peasant revolts during the Mughal rule cutting across caste lines.³⁴

Now it is recognised that despite the heterogeneity of the peasantry it possesses revolutionary potentiality. However, the question remains, that is, which category among the peasantry itself takes up the leadership in the movement or in revolt when it occurs?³⁵ There is a line of thinking favouring leadership of middle peasantry in the revolution.

Lenin and Mao are the first to recognise the middle peasantry but they did not assign the role of leadership to this category in the revolution. Lenin argues that the introduction of capitalism made the position of the peasantry more unstable and created divisions in the rural side. One extreme is linked with

the process of depeasantisation which leads to the creation of the proletariats. The other leads to the emergence of a bourgeoisie class.³⁶ The middle peasantry in such a situation becomes an oscillating category. Only in course of time, due to various factors the bulk of the middle peasantry is pushed to the category of the proletariat and becomes a real driving force of revolution. Therefore the change in the position of the middle peasantry and the whole social structure releases the revolutionary potentiality of the peasantry.

Nevertheless, Mao's analysis of the middle peasantry as an oscillating, petty-bourgeois category opposed to revolution as such. But, the right wing and left wings in this category, according to Mao, act as the enemies and friends of the revolution. So to the poor peasants, Mao assigns the task of "vanguard in the overthrow of the feudal forces and heroes who have performed the great revolutionary task.... without them there would not be any revolution and to deny their role is to deny the revolution itself"³⁷

In recent years a new interpretation on the basis of the above analysis has been advanced by scholars like Eric Wolf and Hamza Alavi, who stress...

that the middle peasantry is the driving force in the initial stages of the peasant uprisings.

After a careful study of the peasant wars in China, Russia, Mexico, Algeria, Vietnam and Cuba, Eric Wolf has come to the conclusion that the revolutionary movement among the peasants do not start with the poor peasantry or with the rural proletariat but with the middle peasantry. The poor peasantry is deprived of land altogether and for that reason it is dependent on landlord for its livelihood. Therefore, it does not possess the necessary internal security to be able to fight against the landlord unless supported by an external aid. Since the middle peasants are the most vulnerable to economic changes, enjoying the requisite tactical freedom to defy the landlords and holding enough land to cultivate it with family labour they are well poised to take the initiative to revolt.³⁸

In the same way after a careful analysis of the rural origins of revolutions in Russia, China and India in the period between 1920 and 1950, a similar picture has been drawn by Hamza Alavi. He contends that because of the economic dependency and fractional ties the poor peasantry and the proletariat who include the the landless labourers become united by their common life

and become militant . But on the other hand, the middle peasants, due to their land holdings become more militant and take up the leadership of the revolution. However, according to Alavi, the militancy of the poor peasants and that of the middle peasants do not go together. Clash of interests occurs between them, and in the process the middle peasantry , threatened by the more militancy of the poor peasants, withdraw its support from the revolution, thus becoming an ambivalent class.³⁹

This analysis of the role of the middle peasantry has been refuted in the Indian context on the ground that it does not exist in an identifiable form. Pochepadass argues on the basis of his careful analysis of the role of peasant classes in India (1927- 50) that the " the driving force (in the movements) was made up of rich and well-to-do peasants, usually belonging to high ranking castes" : whether it was in Champaran (1917), Khera (1918) or in Bardoli (1928) led by Gandhi or the movements led by Kisan Sabhas. During the period from 1917 to 1950 in most cases the peasant movements developed on the basis of class collaboration and middle peasantry did not play a very significant role in the peasant movements.⁴⁰

Dhanagere on the other hand takes up a different

stand on the agrarian movements and argues that till 1920 the main force for the peasant rebellion and uprisings came from the landless labourers, share-croppers and the tenants who had insecurity on holdings. From 1925 to 1938 the middle peasants, the rich and well-to-do farmers were the backbone of peasant parties CPI, CSP, WPP etc. From 1940 onwards the attitude of the peasant parties changed but not the composition. The middle peasantry with an alliance of different peasant groups dominated the peasant struggles in India.

Types of Agrarian Movements in India

The peasants of India have changed the orthodox understanding that they are passive, conservative category. However, their revolutionary potentiality, expressed many times in the history, has been suppressed with a heavy hand by the Indian state. The peasant struggles have been categorised into different groups or periods by scholars like Katherine Gough, Dhanagare and Uday Mehta which show that the peasantry in India were not silent sufferers of their exploitation and they rebelled against the system that threatened their existence values etc.

Katheleen Gough after studying the aims, principles and, organisation of the peasant movements classified the peasant struggles into five categories^{4.1} They are: i) "Restorative Rebellion" meaning annihilation and expulsion of Britishers and tending to restore the system of previous governments and agrarian relations. ii) the peasant movements took the form of "Religious Movements" which occurred due to the loss of customary security, occupation and a sense of deprivation of past heritage. And these movements aimed at establishing an ethical independent rule. iii) the aim of the "Social Bandits" who committed banditry as a protest against the loss of their original lands was to establish divinely ordained kingdom of righteousness and justice iv) The "Terrorist Vengeance" was committed to uphold the natural justice with a sense of pride.v) and the last according to Katheleen Gough, was "Mass Insurrection" in which the peasants provided leadership, initially redressing their grievances against economic deprivation resulting from British rule.

To this classification Dhanagere recently added another category, that is, "Liberal Reformist" which aimed at the establishment of an ideal state perceived by Gandhi. Uday Mehta divided the peasant movement, however,

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into three periods : from 1850 to 1921, from 1923 to 1946 and the Post-independence era.⁴²

At the time when Britishers were knocking at the doors of the Indian subcontinent the Mughal Empire, the last centralised state, was crumbling down due to the process of feudalism and the subsequent establishment of the weak link between the then feudal lords and the Mughal state. The uprisings of the Marathas, the Sikhs, and the Jats during the Mughal rule demonstrated the forms of revolts which questioned the supremacy of the Mughal Empire. But the forms of revolt changed during the British rule due to its agrarian policies. British rule in India in Marx's version was fulfilling a double mission- destructive and regeneration.⁴³ Destructive mission of the British rule was nothing but the annihilation of the old Asiatic Mode of Production which, according to him was communal farming. The Britishers' while destroying the Asiatic Mode of Production brought changes in the land assessment and ownership of land.⁴⁴ This was brought to create a class of people who should not challenge the British authority and at the sametime, Britishers did not allow a powerful indigenious bourgeois to emerge.⁴⁵ However, the institutionalisation of zamindari, mahalwari and ryotwari systems by the Britishers replaced

the old landlord classes by a new aristocratic bourgeois class.

The British rule brought a few fundamental changes in India. It replaced the old feudal lords by new landlords from among the merchant bourgeoisie and tax payers. New aristocratic class emerged, but submitted itself to the dominance of British capital and the village communes, the last remnant of the Asiatic Mode of Production were swept away.⁴⁷

But the phenomenal changes in the rent system from labour and produce rent to compulsory money form,⁴⁸ emergence of intermediaries, famines,⁴⁹ severe exploitation by the Zamindars and the Government introduced different dimensions to the peasant struggles which took the various forms of passive resistance to open revolt and banditry. The first and the foremost agrarian and the national revolt, after the Britishers had subjugated the lands, came in the form of the Great Fakir, later on the Sanyasi rebellion during 1771- 1789.⁵⁰ Changes in the form of rent collection brought the peasants of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh to adopt methods of passive resistance in 1800. The British forces were used in the Mysore state to quell the peasants of Nagar Division during 1830-31.⁵¹ The Santhal tribals in 1855 revolted against the British Government.

The Deccan peasants revolted against the money lenders during 1875. In 1870s the peasants of Pabna revolted against the Zamindars. Mopillas of Kerala rose in revolt against the Zamindars and the Government, during 1920s. But the peasant revolts in the colonial period is considered to be carried out in collaboration with the feudal class. In many cases the leadership was in the hands of former ruling class or the landlord class.⁵²

However, till the entry of Gandhi into the national politics the peasants never directed their struggle for expelling Britishers in toto, and, were not brought into the national main stream. They were not even directed by the early nationalist leaders in their class formation and were not organized by the political organisations. The political nationalist organisation even had not taken up the deteriorating conditions of the peasantry due to its class character. The Congress during its mass struggles instead of mobilizing the peasantry was rather hesistant about mobilizing them.⁵³ Its resolutions were mainly concerned with fixity, permanancy of land holdings and revenue, judicial and legistlative restrictions over assessment, establishment of experimental farms to spread the improved methods of agriculture etc.⁵⁴

Gandhi's contact with the Indian villages underlined the threat of fragmentation which peasant's involvement might pose to the nationalist movement.⁵⁵ Therefore Gandhi sought to harmonise the threat and the possible conflict by means of class collaboration in order to pursue a united front against the Britishers. This attitude resulted in the duality of the ideology and action of the National Congress and Gandhi. So long as the peasant interests were directly affected by the British Government as in the case of Champaran, Bardoli, Khairatpur, Gandhi defended the peasant interest with vigour. But when it came to the question of exploitation by the indigenious landed gentry, Gandhi argued for the mutual trust and compromise.⁵⁶ For instance, in 1931 while discussing with H.W. Emerson, the then Home Secretary to the Government of India, he admitted that the following activities of the peasantry were wrong: withholding payment of rent and land revenue in whole or in part; dissemination of the idea that Swaraj had been attained and, that revenue and rent need no longer be paid; and Attacks by tenants on Zamindars.⁵⁷

Peasants' involvement in the Congress gave real strength to it but at the sametime deepening crisis of the peasantry altered the attitude of the

Congress. This was reflected in the adoption of agrarian programmes at the Faizpur Congress in 1936. However, the concessions did not affect the interests of landed sections.

The policy of appeasement and compromise of the Congress leadership had its impact on the establishment of many independent class organisations in India. Consequently, many organisations came into existence in different parts of the country. All India Kisan Sabha, reflecting the aspirations and attitudes of the entire peasantry, was inaugurated at the time when the Congress was adopting agrarian programme in 1936, with the initial support of Congress Socialist Party and later Communist Party of India. Meanwhile the Kisan Sabha launched an agitation against the Zamindar Zulum in 1927 in Andhra Pradesh. It also demanded the abolition of Zamindari in Bihar, the oppressive forest laws in South India and, an end to the tyranny of Zamindars in other parts of India.⁵⁸

The formation of the Congress Government in different parts of India in 1937 gave stimulus to the peasants whereby the peasants in many cases won partial successes against the rent increase, eviction, forced labour, illegal exaction etc.⁵⁹ However, the contribution

of the peasantry during the time of political upheaval in 1942 demonstrated the unusual consciousness of the peasantry in establishing rival governments, upsetting the means of transportation etc.

However, the end of the British rule in India in 1947 changed the form of the peasant movements except in the parts of Telengana where Indian State became the primary oppressor of the peasantry. The ruthless suppression of the Telengana movement exposed two facets of the Indian State: i) "as a special organisation of force; ii) as an organisation of violence for the suppression of some classes".⁶⁰ The Indian State showed that it can fight against any protest and suppress violence that tends to challenge the existing system itself. The ruling party, that is, the Congress that represented the upper stratum of the society, analysed the whole situation in the context of the Telengana movement and other developments from two different political perspectives. It came to the conclusion that some sort of strategy should be devised to contain the mass revolts. On one hand, the ruling party decided to affect the agrarian reforms and, at the same time the party decided to keep its class nature and interest intact. Since the

peasantry had to be brought into the national main stream and as a device to protect the interests of the bourgeois elements, the land reforms and development of economy became an important agenda in the ruling party's dealings. A number of measures were undertaken: land reforms, bureaucratic and administrative innovations, the establishment of new institutions to provide credits, marketing and technical facilities etc.

The land reform which meant to abolish Zamindari, intermediaries, and to distribute surplus lands to the landless and tillers created discontent in the rural side. On one hand, it broadened the base of the propertied class and, on other hand, the majority of the peasants became insecure. Even prior to the implementation of land legislations the landlords under the pretext of self-cultivation in many places like Karnataka, Bihar etc. forcibly evicted the tenants, tortured them, killed and in some cases pulled down their houses. However, apart from the land legislation, severe drought created massive peasant uprisings in Naxalbari, Srikakulam Bhojpur etc. It is argued that this movement was perceived as the CPI(M)'s unwillingness to thoroughly consummate the 1964 split, as well as the heroic call of the Cultural Revolution of China.⁶² Regular movements in the form of

satyagraha and forceful occupation of land were launched in the states of Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarath, Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Manipur, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, and Madhya Pradesh.⁶³

The rich peasantry which becomes a strong class in itself as distinct from the other rural peasant groups, due to their access to technological innovations has given rise to two types of conflict in the rural areas. Their emergence as a powerful class is associated with a set of particular developments taking place in the countryside.

Land reforms had not affected the rural upper stratum of the peasantry. They were given rehabilitation grants and compensation due to their dubious loss of land. This enabled them to use the amount of compensation for mechanisation based on capitalist farming.

The lacuna in terms of certain concepts used in the land legislation like that of "standard land holding" paved the way for the introduction of the systematic change in the pattern of crop cultivation. Some crops for example, sugarcane under the pretext of commercial cropping, was exempted from the operation of the land ceilings act. To counter the land ceilings and to maintain the status quo, the upper strata shifted its

pattern of cultivation .And when land legislation came into effect, the rich peasantry were in safe position.

Different programmes like Community Development, Panchayath Raj, Co-operative societies strengthened the rural rich and went a long way to reinforce their strong base in the rural side.

The rich peasantry on account of its rich resources introduced commercial farming in its land. Above all, its influence spread even in such fields as rural industries, thus dominating both the agriculture and rural industry.⁶⁴

During 1960s with a view to increasing food production and exporting agricultural goods the "Green Revolution" or "New Technology" formulated by the U.S Government was introduced in India through the mission of the World Bank.⁶⁵ However, the slogan of the Green Revolution simplified the reality and carried the message that the fundamental problems like poverty, unemployment food production etc. were being solved.⁶⁶ As the New Technology began to be available in the regions where the rich peasantry was on the ascendance it came to be appropriated by the rich peasantry effectively ; and

thereby they increased their economic holds.⁶⁷ Along with this New Technology, however, contradictions emerged. This was not only area and class specific but also crop specific. The gains were unevenly distributed, the role of market substantially altered.⁶⁸

In those regions where New Technology was applied, the demands for the agricultural labourers substantially increased the bargaining power of the labourers. Labourers emerged as a "class for itself". Moreover, the right to choose the work substantially increased the bargaining power and subsequently they organised themselves for better wages, rights over certain share of produce, security of employment, better working conditions and the like. In several places like Allepy district of Kerala in 1966-68, the Tanjore district of Tamil Nadu in 1968, Nellore, Guntur and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh, the agricultural labourers agitated for the increase in their wages. In parts like Bihar, Kerala Tripura, West Bengal the agitation took the form of forceful occupation of land.⁶⁹ But the rich peasants adopted brutal measures to suppress the peasant movements. In Tamil Nadu and Bihar the rich and landlord section not only brutalised the tenants and peasants but also refused to allow them to cut grass in their fields.⁷⁰

To counter the peasant movements which were becoming strong the rich peasantry organised themselves effectively pursuing their interest as a class. Their "class for itself" action was aimed at securing more and more concessions and profit maximisation, facilities and assistance from the political authorities. In 1975 the rich peasantry on the false argument of loosing profit in a convention held at New Delhi demanded procurement prices, the abolition of agricultural taxes etc.⁷¹ The accumulation of profit continued till the middle of 1970 but later on this price balance tilted, prices of commodities began to fall; purchasing power also went down, food production, the cost of implements, and techniques increased. This made them to get organised in a systematic manner and fight for their class interest. These rich peasants adopted different techniques- from organizing private *shenas*⁷² to suppress any movements that might challenge their position to Gandhian techniques and ideology by including different classes, pursuing their interest. This became true when the rich peasants of Karnataka,⁷³ Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Punjab adopted the Gandhian tactics in 1980s.

It is true that the individual peasants of South India were the victims of exploitation, begar,

suppression and rack rent⁷⁴ their counter parts in North India that dated back to the time of British rule and subsequent changes introduced in the colonial period in India. The peasant struggle or consciousness of the agricultural proletariat was slower to emerge and did not mark great success in South India.

The fact that the difference in culture among the landlords and peasants alienated the latter from the former resulted in the mutual conflict in North and Eastern India. For example, in Bengal the Hindu Zamindars sat heavy on the Muslim peasants.⁷⁴ However, this was further accentuated by the price rise and cash cropping pattern. But in South India the Britishers made the settlement with the leaders and elites of particular caste-⁷⁵ whether these were upper castes or upper stratum of the Sudra caste⁷⁶. This absence of religious dominance contributed to the peasant silence except the Mopilla revolt to some extent.

The Britishers made the landlord section of North India as agents of political institutions with the economic and social interests and prestige attached to them. But they totally neglected the working of rural panchayats that could tend to pacify the rural discontent. On the other hand in South India, the land owning classes were recruited as village headmen with magisterial, economic

and political powers. These rural classes always collaborated with the Britishers to quell any discontent wherever it occurs.

In South India there was a total absence of communal groups or organisations that could take up the issues and organise the rural masses. Therefore, the spontaneous uprisings or movements were not organised in a systematic manner and with any ideological commitments. The absence of the organisations for the peasant proletariat disadvantaged the rural poor and made them victims of the British Government which used force and violence to put down any resistance of the peasants. Even the Britishers collaborated with the erstwhile rulers and chiefs by granting political pensions for the maintenance of their perpetual friendship and, thereby foiled any attempt to mobilize the peasants against the Britishers.⁷⁷

The institutionalisation of law by Britishers through different acts that determined the relationship between tenants and landlords and, these were always found in favour of landlords and various groups of tenants (mostly well off section). However, once the law had been subjected to change by political pressure either with mass agitation or polling booths the legal categories become a part of political categories.

However, the legal system in South India initially based on customs and then on contract was full of ambiguities and contradictions. Zamindars and Inamdars in South India came under general laws only in 1920s.⁷⁸ Hence the absence of legal and political point of reference retarded the process of peasant organisation in South India. Even the settlement in ryotwari area was made district by district and thereby any resistance of the peasants was isolated and suppressed.

However, the initial peasant struggle in Karnataka came on the wake of changes in the rent system that was introduced by the Britishers. Immediately after the annexation of South Kanara in 1800⁷⁹ the traditional kind of rent system either in produce or in labour was replaced by money rent. that was made compulsory. The new system⁸⁰ stirred the peasantry. At the sametime the Bellary peasants were opposing the land revenue and other innumerable cesses.⁸¹ However, the peasants in both places even before Gandhi could come to experiment with civil disobedience in 1920s and 1930s experimented with certain forms of passive resistance and practically proved that the Government could be brought to oblige the peasantry with this tactics. This was followed by the Koots rebellion in 1830-31 in the same South Kanara region reflecting their mood against the exorbitant revenue in the period of depression

They started no-tax agitation and formed riotous assemblies.⁸² In 1836, the peasants of Sullia and Coorg protested against the expansionist and colonialist policy of the British Government.⁸³ In 1830-31 the British Government supported and helped the Mysore state in quelling the peasant movements of Nagar Division.⁸⁴ This movement was started as a protest against the revenue policy of the ruler to enhance the revenue.

Till the formation of the Congress Socialist Forum in 1930s, the peasants in Karnataka did not come under the influence of political parties that could take up the issues of the peasantry. After 1930s these Socialists began to take up the issues of workers and peasantry on a large scale in and around North Kanara. Their struggle in Karnataka began with the formation of Ankola Taluk Rythe Sangha in 1945 and demanded a law to lower the farm rent to one third of the gross yield of the paddy land, the application of Bombay Agricultural Debt Relief and Tenancy Act of 1939 and advocated boycott of the
⁸⁵ landlords. The other important struggle came in 1950-51 when they picked up the satyagraha in Kodagu against the compulsory procurement in personal kolaga, a sort of measurement, for abolition of begar, for receipt of rent

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payment by the tenants.

Gandhi's realisation of the peasant involvement in the national struggle through non-violence resulted in the adoption of forest satyagraha to woo the tribals during Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930.⁸⁷ As a part of the nationalist movement the Congress nationalists in Karnataka launched the Forest Satyagraha in North Kanara against the oppressive forest officials, loss of traditional rights in the collection of fuel and fodder, and the restriction placed on the grazing lands.⁸⁸ But in Hirekerur of Dharwar district, despite Gandhi-Irwin pact the satyagraha was intensified for economic reasons that culminated in Diwakar- Smrit agreement assuring necessary relief to the peasants.

In Karnataka the tradition of the peasant movements was sporadic and were centered in certain pockets of Karnataka. It is quite interesting to note that only in the Gandhian movements the rich peasantry had the higher stake. Till 1980, the movements were more of caste based one than class one. In fact the period from 1980 to 1985 for our study is undertaken for the reason that it was for the first time that the clear-cut character of the agrarian movement was exposed under the leadership of Rytha Sangha whose ideology and strength lie in the domination of the rich peasantry in the agrarian structure and the uses of New Technology introduced in Karnataka in recent years.

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peasantry emerged also due to other factors. They were :i) very defects in the tenurial system that caused a sense of insecurity ii)continued enhancement of rent from the time of Vijayanagara rulers iii)increasing exploitation by the Patels and the subsequent replacement of owner cultivator into tenants and landless labourers iv)simultaneous exploitation by the money lending class and the merchant class. However, during Krishnaraja Odeyar II's regime the prices began to fall and the demand by the Amildars to collect the rent to balance the dues of British Government further fuelled the already existing situation. Boodi Basavappa organised the peasants assuring the reduction of assessment, remission of all previous balances etc. Along with the demand for the replacement of Amildars the struggle brought forth anti Brahmin attitude. Before it could spread to Mysore revolt was crushed. The Special Committee appointed by the Britishers in its report of 12 December 1833 said that the rebellion was not a popular rising caused by intolerable tyranny, but it was the work of an ambitious pretender to a large feudal estate, aided by some of disaffected land holders of the provinces. See Karnataka State Gazetter,

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CHAPTER II
CHANGING AGRARIAN STRUCTURE AND CLASS
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Changes in the agrarian structure as a result of changing socio-economic and political conditions have had an impact upon peasant movements. This change may operate in the agrarian structure at different levels: at the institutional pattern of land ownership, at the productive forces, pattern of distribution!

Karnataka, which derived its name from Kari Nadi, (black soil), Kammittu Nadu (frgent soil) till the reorganisation of the State did not constitute a single geographical unit. At the time of reorganisation of the State in 1956 South Kanara and Bellary were in Madras Presidency. Bijapur, Belgam, Dharwar, and North Kanara were seperated from the Bombay Presidency and merged into Karnataka. The Hydrabad Karnataka . . . comprised of Raichur, Gulbarga and Bidar. Coorg was under the rule of Britishers with its Commissioner in Mysore. However, one feature holds true of all the rulers ruled in different parts of Karnataka is that they tried to follow the ryotwari system in which peasants were brought into direct relations with the State.

This ryotwari- whether officially recognised and

institutionalised by the then rulers or the Britishers- should be differentiated from the Zamindari system that existed in other parts of India. Zamindar, prior to British rule itself, was a vessel or proprietor and was confirmed to individuals from upper strata of feudal class. The Zamindari system of British rule admitted three interests on land- the Government, the owner, the tenant cultivator- and two payments- the payment of rent by the tenant cultivators to the land owners and the payment of land revenue to the Government. But the ryotwari settlement determined the relations between land on the one hand and, the interested parties on the other- the Government, the owner cultivator and, thereby determined the rights and natural obligations of these parties, the share of each in gross produce and the amount and the use of surplus. This system made two interests on land- the Government and the owner cultivator and only one payment viz, revenue.⁵ However, in course of time the myth of peasant proprietorship vanished as the new intermediary classes began to emerge and pauperisation of peasantry became a process in agriculture. But these ryotwari peasants or tenants were not the victims of illegal exaction like abwab in Zamindari area. They had the right of sale and transfer of property. Nevertheless, all the resources of cultivation like irrigation

and land constitute the private property of Zamindars did not help in the facilitation of irrigation and cultivation. This did not become a rule in ryotwari area.

Despite the semi infeudation⁶ and the direct relations with the peasants the then rulers of Karnataka showed little interest on the upliftment of the peasantry exploitation , suppression etc. Infact, to understand the agrarian movements it is essential that we should have a glance over the historical development of agrarian structure.

South and North Kanara: These two Kanaras⁷ initially were under the Madras Presidency but for the administrative convenance North Kanara was attached to Bombay Presidency in 1862.⁸

Even before the British settlement there were families holding many plots or estates paying annual rents in these two districts and was called Warg. These Wargs were of two types: Muli and Geni and were further devided into Kadim and Hosagame.⁹ Mulwarg meant the original property right and Mulwargdhar was the original property holder. Geni or Sarkar Geni were the lands resigned or abonded or due to the lapse of heirs, the ownership of which was taken over by the Government. Most of the

time the Genidhars were either the old tenants or the occupants set up by the Government.

To bring the waste lands into cultivation British rule introduced Hosagame Warg system which when compared with Mulwargdhar is same except for the fact that holders did not enjoy the privileges and assesment over jungles and pasture lands attached to the Mulwargdhars.

The Mulwargdhars were the real landlōrds of the holdings. However, two types of tenancy existed under them. They were Mulgeni and Chalageni.

Mulgeni was a permanent tenancy system in which a special rent was paid to the landlord. This rent could not be altered nor could the tenants be evicted so long as the they paid their dues. But in most cases the rent was nominal. Hence, the tenants could carry on the cultivation without any uncertainty; but had no right to dispose of the land except that they could mortgage it. This practice lead to the alienation of certain portion of the lands by the landlords . The tenants who returned their lands had the right to claim compensation for any improvement on their land.

Chalageni tenants were tenants-at-will created most of the time without any written agreement and they used to pay the rent in cash or in kind as per the custom or the agreement. Further, the land

could be cultivated for a given duration.

In between these two tenurial practices another practice emerged vaguely in South Kanara called Vaide Geni according to which the tenants hold land for a specific period of time paying progressive rate of rent to the landlord . This was common when land was used for coconut plantation. Such tenure in North Kanara was called Nadagi. As a result of sub infeudation another set of tenants called Nyaya Genidhars emerged in which the lapse of heirs could restore the lands to the original landlord. ¹⁰

In Kanaras each and every village had Inam holdings especially the temple. However, the British attitude was one of total indifference to this grant.

Coorg: The land system in this little province of 1583 square miles was somewhat peculiar. In this State the most elaborate and complete settlement was affected by Lingaraj in 1812 who introduced 'shist' system on all classes of lands. This created a systematic account in which all farms were registered and this resembles with Shivappa Naika's (a polegar of Nagar Division) shist system according to which the revenue was to be decided on the previous twelve years production, fertility of the soil etc.

Lingaraj also introduced Kolu and Bhatti system for the measurement and the assesment of the land revenue.

Besides rent free holdings, Lingarajas settlement brought four kinds of land tenure. They were Jamma, Sagu, Umboli, and Jodi. However, the lands on which the land revenue had been wholly or partially assigned or released were devided into Batamanya, Jagir, Sarvamanya, Jodi Matt land, Gaudumbali and Naimannu.

Jamma lands were confered to the privilaged class called Jamma ryots who were either Coorg, Amma Coorgs, Heggades, Eimbokolas, Gaudas, Mopillas, Ayaries and occasionally Brahmins.¹¹ Despite the feudal nature this tenure had these three feature i) a light assesment and civil service to the State when demanded¹² ii) land ownership was heriditary and permanet iii) lands were to be cultivated by specified number of labourers attached to the property. The land holdere under this tenure were liable to be called out to repel the external aggression or quell the internal disturbances.¹³ During the times of peace they were also required to furnish all police and treasure escorts etc. The land holders were prohibited from selling, mortgaging or alienating lands.¹⁴ For every holding a Sanad was granted and

succession fee called Nazrana Kanike was paid on receiving the Sanad in three annual instalments and also a fee called Ghatte Jamma on taking possession. No remission of Jamma rent was made except under extraordinary circumstances such as the death of several members of family, destruction of property by fire etc.¹⁵ Since the lands could not be sublet, mortgaged or alienated without the permission of Government, the attached labourers in due course created problems as a result of their involvement in the State services. Obviously, the demand came from the holders for subletting. Government yielded to the enormous pressure only on the condition that the leased land should not exceed more than the one fourth of the farm.

Sagu was an ordinary tenure of the country and it was an occupancy or ryotwari tenure. The holders were not bound to render any feudal service to the State as the Jamma holders.¹⁶ The tenants were to pay Rs 10 or 100 Shutties as land tax. The tenants were given the right to claim remission if they were unable to cultivate their lands or farms. The Sagu peasants could transfer, mortgage or alienate their lands but they were denied of the proprietorship of the lands. The taxes on these lands were calculated only after considering various expenses and difficulties involved in it ¹⁷

Umboli lands were granted for the past services rendered to the State. Earlier the lands were not taxed but in due course they were lightly taxed with the issue of a title deed or Sanad.¹⁸ The lands were perpetual and the holders did not have the right to sublet or mortgage them.

Sarvamanya and Jodi were lands granted to some religious establishments and few village headmen or Patels in Yelusaveera Seeme.¹⁹ These lands under Patels could not be sublet and if left uncultivated these could be transferred to any peasant on Sagu tenure.²⁰ The land was not absolutely free of assesment. In the case of Sarvamanya land full assesment was assigned to the religious institutions while under the Jodi tenure half the revenue was assigned to the religious institutions and the remaining to the Government.

Under the Batamanya tenurial practice land was granted to the Brahmins and to their lineal descendents on the condition that they would perform certain religious ceremonies.²¹ The original holder had the right to alienate land and if he cultivates himself then he was entitled to the exemption of payment of rent. Once he alienates the land new holder was liable to the payment of revenue to the State.

In the Jagir system the land was given in recognition of services rendered and was held free of assessment and the holders were not exempted from responsibilities. They had to perform police duties or to assist those who were directly in charge of such duties.²² It was held in most cases in perpetuity, and in some cases extending over few generations. Some Jagirdars²³ were assignees of full land revenue while others were in absolute possession of land free of assessment.

Since the rulers of Coorg belonged to the Veerasiva religion they granted lands to the religious institutions of Veerasivas known as Matt lands for the maintenance and for the residence of the ascetics. The Matts were intended to give shelter to the travellers belonging to the Lingayath Community and of other upper classes.²⁴ The land under this tenure was held free of assessment and Mattadars were merely managers of endowments.

There were village service Inams called Gaudumbali and Naimannu granted to Patels, Kulvaris, Neergrantis etc. Usually Patels held the Gaudumbali land, the Naimannu land was held by Kulvaris or Neergrantis. The permanent holder of this land was not given the right to alienate his lands.

Thus the land system in Coorg was based partly on

ryotwari lines. The land leasing however was not a common practice in Coorg.²⁵

Hydrabad-Karnataka Area : In Hydrabad Karnataka area that comprised of Bidar, Raichur and Gulbarga districts the original assessment was based on Thodar Mal's (revenue minister of Akbar) revenue system in which quantity of grain sown or its produce was the determining factor for revenue assessment. Before 1853, Mughals and other rulers used Coorgy as the unit of land and later on changed into acre system. In due course the Pawte book which introduces the practice of actual assessment was brought into operation. Kowl (agreement) was granted to the land holders for a fixed period and this concord entered into provided for any future enhancement of revenue if found justified. At the same time the Inam lands which were held by the Patels and Patwaris in exchange of their services to the State were taken back. Ayapatti, a fixed sum was paid to the Patels and Patwaris instead of customary Baluta from the cultivators.

Nawab Sir Salar Jung I, the then Prime Minister of Hydrabad State introduced Zilla Bandi system between 1853 and 1883²⁶ in order to improve the fiscal position of

the State. Under this system the abolition of the then existing farming system was considered as the most outstanding contribution towards the land system. Under this system land was individually assessed and rent was fixed on the basis of the average payment of revenue made during the previous ten years.

The official introduction of ryotwari system in India by Britishers with the objective of increasing the revenue and creating a direct link with the peasants had its own impact on the Princely States in India. The implementation of ryotwari system in Hyderabad as in the case of other parts of India, gave impetus to the emergence of intermediaries and sub tenurial practices. However, the forms in which land was actually held under ryotwari can be classified as Pattadai, Pot Pattadari, Shikmidari and Asami Shikmis. Beside these there were different tenure under Diwani lands known as Pan Masta, Taheed or Sarbasta and Ijara.

Pattadari was a registered occupant of land and he cultivated the land personally or through hired labour. His occupancy depended upon the regular payment of assessment.

The Pot Pattadari tenure resembles the share cropping where two or more cultivators hold joint patta.

Pattadari in this Pot Pattadari tenure had no right to evict his co-holder and was not legally empowered to increase the rent payable by him.

In the Shikmidari tenurial practice the tenants enter into an agreement with the actual holder of the land for the cultivation on specified terms and were not be evicted so long as they pay the rent and carry out the agreement with the landlord.

Under Asami Shikmis tenants could be thrown out from their land at landlords will, but in 1924 through a law they were protected against the onslaught of landlords.

Pan Masta was the contractual agreement having fixity of tenure and rent. During the period of contract the landlords could not increase the assessment of the tenants. They were also tenants-at-will.

Taheed or Sarbasta was a peculiar land tenure in which land was leased for a specified period. Before the introduction of ryotwari system along with the land revenue certain other taxes were charged by the contractors. Sir Salar Jung I abolished this type of practice and tenure.

With the intension of rehabilitating the village and bringing under cultivation large tracts of waste lands, Sir Salar Jung I introduced Ijara tenurial system in which

the land was initially assessed at a lower rate but subjected to progressive increase till it reached the full assessment. Sometimes the lease was made for thirty or forty years.

Along with this, ^{some} there lands given as a reward for some services rendered to the State and to keep the status and dignity of Sovereign or the grantee. But the status of the Jagirdars in the State was quite different from that of Zamindars or permanently settled areas elsewhere. They had no right over the soil and were entitled to taxation and had the right over excise, forest, and fisheries within their jurisdiction. Many of the Jagirdars were exercising police, judicial and administrative powers, these powers were curtailed gradually. In fact their power of collecting revenue had no legal sanction. The Jagir Revenue Recovery Regulation of 1935 cleared the position of Jagirdars in favour of tenants who opposed this revenue collection.

However, the Jagir tenure prevailed in Hyderabad can be classified under different heads in accordance with the nature of grant.

Altamgha was a perpetual hereditary Jagir of Highest order and most coveted.²⁷ This tenure was not

subjected to sale, alienation, bequest and was revenue free, made under royal seal.

Zat Jagirs were granted by a Sanad for the maintenance of the Jagirdars without any condition of service to be rendered. It was initially tenable for grantees life time but could be reissued in favour of his eldest son by a subsequent Sanad.

For the maintenance of the Sanad holder and his family or as a supplement to his other means of livelihood Tankwa Jagirs were granted and the Jagirs could be attached on the death of the Sanad holder. Generally, these were reissued to the deceased eldest son.

The Jagirdars in Maqta tenure were to pay a fixed amount as Pan Maqta and this grant was an unconditional and sometimes conditional as well.

The Omli grants were similar to that of Maqta but the only distinguishing feature was that two thirds of the assessment was to be paid to the grantee as revenue and the remaining one third was retained by Jagirdars.

For the religious purposes Government granted Agrahars as Jagirs to Hindu priestly classes and families. Apart from temples, mosques etc. were also granted Jagirs for the purpose of maintaining religious institutions and such grants were called Mash, Masroot-ul Khidamath.²⁸

Nizam also had land called Sarf-e-Khas whose revenue was contributed towards privy purse. In addition to these Jagirs there were Inams also. In district like Bidar eight types of Inams existed viz, Service, Madan Mash, Baluta, Hadoli, Mazkari, Oati, Halgia and Mattoathi existed.

Service Inams were granted to religious and charitable institutions of Hindus and Muslims. They were also given to the Deshmuks and Deshpandes of villages.

Certain families were given Inams for their maintenance, livelihood and were called Madad Mash Inams.

Even the village working class was given Inams for the service it rendered to the village and it was called Baluta Inams. But the working classes like Cobler, Carpernter, Blacksmith, washerman, Kumbaras who possess the Inams were prohibited from leaving the village where lands were granted to them.

Dalits for cleaning the villages were granted lands for their service and were called Hadoli Inams.

Sometimes, Mazkeri Inam was granted to the person who served in the village office

The Oati Inams were granted to those persons who cleared village meeting places and made arrangements

like drinking water for the officers who visited the village.

The persons who rendered the service of announcing Government orders were granted Halgia Inams.

The Mattpathi Inams were granted to those families who rendered services to people who visited Mutts from different parts.²⁹

Old Mysore State : Prior to the reorganisation, the princely State of Mysore comprised of nine districts viz, Shimoga, Mandya, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Mysore, Bangalore, Chickmagalur, Hassan and Kolar. Land system in this State had undergone changes from time to time passing through various stages.

Practically the Vijayanagara rule brought the whole of South India under its sway. In course of their conquests the rulers reinstated the original rulers on submitting tribute to them. To clear the jungles, to bring the lands under cultivation, to increase the population and the prosperity of the State the rulers appointed their trusted slaves and servants as Governors. These Governors formed many Poleyas or Polepats and those who establish Poleyams under the Sovereign were distinguished with the title of Polegars. These Polegars formed in course of time

their own administrative policies, kept armies and became very powerful aristocrats in Mysore.³⁰

For the purpose of the convenient revenue administration rulers formed many regulations called Rayarekas, that fixed the assessment, boundaries, duties and customs. Rayarekas was handed over to the headmen of the towns and villages as record for reference in settling boundary disputes, revenue disputes etc. Long before British settlement the Rayarekas acted as the authentic rules on revenue administration.³¹

Three tenurial practices existed during Vijayanagara rule: Amara, Bhandarvada and Manya and they refer to the manner in which the shares in the income from villages were determined. Bhandarvada was the smallest category and some portion of its income went to the maintenance of forts. A large number of villages contributed a portion of their output in order to support Brahman temples or Manya (tax free) villages. The Amara category was a residual category referring as to how the income of some villages were to be distributed after specific reduction for other

purposes like support of forts and Brahmins.³²

Land system did not undergo any drastic change under Mysore Rajas except during Chick Devaraya's reign, (1672-1704) who followed the twin policies of pacifying the revolting Polegaras by asking them to relinquish their post and stay back in the capital and at the same time raising different taxes from the peasants and making them the tenants of the State. During his reign Batayi system was also in practice.

Hyder Ali followed the original pattern of land system but he made slight changes in the land administration like appointing Harikars, a machinery for hearing grievances of the peasants. However, this machinery did not bring any relief to the peasants.

During Tippu Sultan's reign the Polegars who occasionally rose in revolt against the State were totally suppressed, Inams of Hindu Brahmins were attached lands of all Patels,³³ Taj Kars³⁴ and others were measured and assessed like that of the other peasants' holdings. Revenue farming by the district officials was strictly prohibited and the land holdings restricted to one mauze³⁵ in farm and land which had been fallow for ten years was distributed to peasants for cultivation subject to progressive taxation.³⁶

Hissa and Ijara were the tenurial practices that existed during Tippu Sultan's rule. On Hissa tenure Government collected certain percentage of the produce as its revenue, which was decided on the basis of fertility and irrigation facilities. On the same basis, the land was divided into different categories like first, second, third and fourth. It should be noted that in the recent land reforms introduced by the Karnataka Government this categorisation was taken into consideration. On the contrary under Ijara tenure land was granted to the peasants for fixed rent, under Tippu's reign.

The granting of ownership of a Jagirs in return for the services rendered were of two kinds: i) hereditary ownership and ii) ownership lapsing with one's death without any right to bequeath. However, the land system created by Tippu Sultan did not favour the peasants due to nepotism, favouritism etc. in the distribution of land and also its administration.

The defeat of Tippu Sultan and, the subsequent transfer of power in 1799 to the original Odeyar family, brought Poornayya as the regent of the minor King by the Britishers. During the time of transfer, chaotic situation had prevailed as a result of revolt by Polegars

and land lords. Under these circumstances, Poornayya commenced his administration by proclaiming unqualified remission of all outstanding taxes due to the State, and restored the ancient Hindu rate of assessment. The Diwan believed that hereditary land property and fixed rents may be advantageous both to the peasants and also to the Government and, therefore, introduced the system of 'hereditary right cultivator' according to which the peasants have the ownership of land so long as they paid the rent to the Government. Hence, the moment peasants cease to cultivate the land, the State could transfer to itself the ownership rights, enabling it to transfer to those fulfilling the obligations. However, some of the Inams seized by Tippu Sultan were restored to their original holders during Poornayya's regency.

With the transfer of power from Poornayya to Krishna Raja Odeyar (1811-1831) the land structure underwent a change. The task of establishing a Hindu Kingdom brought forth the necessity of granting Inams to the religious institutions. Inams were also granted to his favourites and relatives. These steps adversely effected.

the existing practice of land holdings. Odeyar granted two types of lands to his favourites: Kayamgutta and Nirupa.

Under Kayamgutta, the grantee held village for a fixed rent, and this ownership was continued as a hereditary right, whereas, under Nirupa grantee held the ownership of land for a fixed period.

At the end of his rule there were many types of tenurial practices, like Kandayam or Batai, Amini Talav, Jodidars, Shraya, Kodagi, Gadde Bhatta and Shist, in addition to the above tenures.

Land under Kandayam was held for a fixed rent but peasant could be dispossessed of his land if he fails to pay the rent.

Waram or Batai land was held by the peasant under the condition that he would share produce with the State. In reality, the status of the cultivator was nothing more than that of hired labourer. The peasant was under obligation to work his Waram land.³⁷

Land covered by the tanks belonged to no particular village and were called Amini Talav. These lands were cultivated by the peasants from several neighbouring villages under the supervision of Government officials.³⁸

There were lands held by Brahmins, under

favourable rent, called Jodidars.

In Shraya tenure the land was held under a specified rent and for a specific period of three to four years.

The tenants under Kodagi tenure were to pay a fixed rent. They were original Inam lands.³⁹

In Taluks of Ikkeri, Sagar, Mandagadde, Koppa and Kavaledurga a specific tenure existed in which rent was paid in kind and was called Gadde Bhatta.

There were peasants cultivating lands under an assessment called Shist.

On the assumption of power in Mysore in 1831, the task before Britishers was not to inaugurate a new system but to "refer flagrant abuses in the old, to secure the people especially agrarian classes, in their just right against the gross tyranny..." In other words, the task before British administration was to undo the blatant exploitation of the peasants, particularly by the intermediary classes, who had been exercising illegal authority, but still enjoyed patronage during Diwans period. Hence the foremost task was to institutionalise Ryotwari system. As a first step in this direction the British administration lowered the rate of rent when and where it was excessive, and also the terms of

payment was simplified.

Towards the end of British rule there were two types of land tenure.: i) Sarkar or Government lands, and ii) Inam lands. The former was held under Ryotwari or individual tenure on payment of fixed money rent settled for thirty years. There was a provision for granting remission during the time of distress. This remission was not granted to any particular individual cultivator, but to the cultivators in general.⁴⁰

In the case of private estates such as Kayamgutta or Inams, the land was cultivated by the Perikaris or tenants. However, different types of tenurial practices were prevalent.

Under Varam tenure the landlord and the tenant shared the produce equally, and the former paid the assessment on the land to the State.⁴¹

In the Mukappa tenure two thirds of the produce was retained by the cultivator and the one third was remitted to the landlord who paid the assessment.

The cultivator under Arakandaya or Chaturbagha had to pay one fourth of the produce to the landlord. Landlord paid only half of the assessment and other half being paid by the tenant as the revenue.⁴²

Tenants paid a fixed money rent under Wolakandaya that was sometimes equal to or more than the

assessment on land.

Inam that had its history from the beginning of Anegudi Rajas, Keladis, and Ikkeri Chiefs continued even during British rule but with a slight change in the nature of grants. Generally, during the pre-British period Inams were granted to please the King's favourites or to religious institutions and also for services rendered to the State. Prior to the Britishers, there were attempts during Poornayya's regency to maintain proper records of the Inams granted and thereby check irregularities. This was made at Taluk levels and on individual basis. In 1866 Britishers appointed Inam Commission but its operation came to an end in 1881.

Hayavadana Rao has classified the Inam holdings under the British rule as follows: Devadaya, Dharmadaya Personal, Kodagi, Inams for miscellaneous service, Village Artisan Inams, Village Service, and three special Inams : Kodagi, Malnad Inams, and Inams within the Jagirs of Sringeri Matt.⁴³

Lewis Rice has enumerated thirteen types of Inams that existed at the end of 1897 : Sarvamanya, Ardhamanya, Jodi Village, Sthal or Mahal Jodi, Devadaya or Dharmadaya, Bhatamanya or Brahmadeva, Jodi Agraharas, Umboli Uttur, Shist and Kutugaddi

Inams, Kodagi Inams, Bavadi Inams, Karebandi, Kare Kulaga Inams, and Putta Gadde Inams.

Dharmadaya or Devadaya Inams were granted to support the charitable and religious institutions and also persons in these services.⁴⁴ Devadaya grant was made in every village and usually granted out of large waste areas.

Kodagi Inams which Hayavadana Rao considers as special Inams were granted freely or on a light assessment in consideration of construction and restoration of tanks or on the condition that they were being maintained in good position.

On the consideration of service rendered to the village, village servants held Umboli Uttur Inams. This Inam prevailed mainly in Nagar Division. and was generally subjected to the payment of Jodi.

Village servants, and the descendents of the holders of the defunct services of Deshpande, Kulkarni, Nadiger held shist and Kutugaddi which infact resembled with the old Shivappa Nayak's Shist without the patta or subsequent imposition.

Servamanya Inams were grants of villages or lands held free of any assessment.

Ardhamanya or Ardhaya were Inams assessed at

half the usual rate.⁴⁵

Jodi villages or lands were granted on a light assessment, the proportion of which to the full rate of assessment varied from one grant to another.

There were villages wholly held by the Brahmins for their livelihood on a favourable tenure called Jodi Agraharas. But sometimes the Agraharas merely consisted of selected streets to which some patches of cultivated land leased out by the Brahmins were attached.

Sthal or Mahal Jodi came into existence during the maladministration of the Maharajas, which was intended to promote cultivation under the incentive of a permanent assessment based on the then existing rent.

Bhatamanya or Brahmadeva tenure used to denote the land grants made to the Brahmins for their personal livelihood and were exempted from payment of quit rent.

In some of the Taluks of Kolar Bavadi or Desavanda Inam was granted to the maintenance of wells. Initially one tenth of the produce of the land was paid to the construction of the wells as well as his remuneration. This proportion, however, was not strictly practiced.

For the annual petty repairs of the tanks Inams called Karebandi and Karekulaga were granted . But after the grants the Inamdars became least concerned with the repairs.

Patta Gaddes were patches of land held by the peasants of one village in another village on a mutual agreement.

There were some Inams granted for miscellaneous services like police, revenue, and communal service as distinct from village service.⁴⁶

Within the Jagirs of Sringeri a regulation was passed in 1897 on the request of Guru of Sringeri Matt, provided for the conversion of paddy payments into land Inams, and for the enforcement of certain conditions in the case of Agraharas.⁴⁷

From 1881 to 1947 three Kings ruled Mysore but they made no changes in the agrarian system .

Bombay -Karnataka : In Bombay-Karnataka area which comprised of Dharwar, Belgam, Bijapur, and North Kanara (which we have discussed along with South Kanara) the system of assesment followed during the reign of Bijapur (1556 -1686), the Savanur (1685-1752) and the Maratha rulers (1752- 1817)

was originally laid down during the reign of Kriahnaderaraya of Vijayanagara (1509-1529). Rayarekas, as elsewhere we have explained, became Rakam or the basis of settlement of subsequent rulers.⁴⁸ The initial increase in the cess was followed by the Savanur rulers. During the Maratha reign a maximum assessment known as Kamal was imposed on each village and Government tried its level best to realize the maximum revenue from the peasants. During the harvest season the division of crops (Bhagabatai) was made, the farmer took from the peasant the share of the Government, which varied between one half and one third of the produce after deducting the cost of cultivation.

The acquisition of Darwar, Bijapur, and Belgam in 1818 by the Britishers initially did not alter the assessment system. Upto 1843 in Bijapur no attempt was made to revise the Maratha assessment.⁴⁹ However, Baji Rao's revenue farming system which postulated the auctioning of Maulatdari post and the post of Public Revenue Officer to the highest bidder had created havoc in the districts. This was immediately suspended in favour of the personal Ryotwari system. Under the Ryotwari system the initial assessment was

made for thirty years, during which period the peasant was at liberty to alienate his occupancy right. Moreover, he could not be dispossessed of land so long as he paid the assessment to the State.⁵⁰ At the conclusion of the agreement the Government retained the right to revise the revenue. But the tenants could continue to hold occupancy right provided they accepted the new terms.⁵¹ This system had given the peasants security of tenure, power of alienation either temporarily by mortgage or permanently by sale. But it also created disadvantages to the peasants. The payment in cash rather than in kind created the unpleasant incidents like forceful attachment, sale of produce to get rent in terms of money, alienation of holdings, and thus, relegating the position of occupant to a mere serf of the money lenders.

Besides the Ryotwari tenure in Bombay Presidency there were other tenurial practices known as Talukdars, Mehwasi, Udad Jamabandi, Kholi, Izafat, and revenue free lands.

The Talukdari tenure prevailed mostly in Gujarath. Talukdars were the owners of the estates, subjected to the Government demand and their estates were periodically revised. They levied rent on their tenants which was either in the form of a share in the crops or

in the forms of a fixed rate per acre.

Mehwasi was a system of paying revenue in lump sum for the village and the amount was fixed at the discretion of the Collector.

Udhad Jamabandi was a fixed assessment not liable to revision on villages or groups of villages.

The Koti tenure, which prevailed in Konkan region, constitutes the holdings of village lands by families who made an agreement with the Government, and had the right to alienate their land on their own terms.

Izafath tenure sprang up from the holdings of hereditary local officers, who paid the full rent⁵².

In Bombay- Karnataka area too, many Inam land holdings existed which were of following types: Personal or Jat Inams, Political Inams, Devasthan Inams, Service Inams. However, land under this tenure was technically called 'alienate lands' meaning "transfer of lands in so far as the rights of the Government to the payment of the rent or land revenue are concerned wholly or partially to the ownership of any person".

Personal or Jat Inams were granted to individuals as compensation and these Inams were held on hereditary basis. A fixed rent was levied on these Inam holdings by the Government.

Political Inams included Saranjams and Jahagirs granted for the service rendered in civil and military departments. It was also granted to keep the dignity of the nobles and officials at high esteem. These Inams were not subject to further divisions. In the former case the tenure was hereditary, and in the latter it was to last for a varying period of time.

Religious institutions were granted Devasthan Inams which were made perpetual and rent was fixed once for all.

Service Inams were in the nature of land holdings or cash receipts or also in the form of right to fees.⁵³

Changing Agrarian structure and Land Legislation

In recent years the developing countries are facing constant demand for the land reforms from two angles: from within and from without. In these countries the land remains not only the main source of income but also as a dominant factor determining political power. Therefore, the influence of agrarian system on the political system can hardly be ignored. It follows that the demand for land reforms, particularly, the demand of reforms in the agrarian structure, plays a dynamic role in determining

the exercise of political power.⁵⁴

Since the land reforms are directly related to agrarian structure, it has three main implications for the society: economic, social and political. In the economic field the land reforms aim to shatter the hegemony of a particular class over land holdings, and thereby prepares the ground for the redistribution. In Karnataka Brahmin, Lingayath and Okkaliga communities constitute not only landlord class but also absentee land lord section. The grant of Jagirs or Inams accelerated the development of absentee landlord section, which solely depends on the exploitation of the peasants through exorbitant rate of rent. The semi or sub infeudation has given rise to many tenurial practices like Chalageni, Mulageni, Kodagi etc. under which cultivation was generally carried on by the lower class peasants or landless labourers.

The existence of economic disparities was directly reflected in the structural differences within the society. Official institutinalisation of Ryotwari system by the Britishers did not in any real sense free the labouring class from the clutches of the landlord. For example, Hattalu⁵⁵ and Mannalu type of serfdom existed in Karnataka for [^]long period. But the practice of

slaves trading was banned in Madras Presidency long back in 1843 itself.⁵⁶ However, changes in the agrarian structure has transformed the form of operation of slavery. For instance, the indebtedness of peasantry forced them to practically work as slaves under landlords.

In a dominant agrarian society the landlord section being part of the ruling class tries to block the land legislation, that would jeopardise its class interest. Hence, under these situations measures of land legislation are superficial in nature.

Prior to the reorganisation of the States, different land legislations were in operation in various parts, that subsequently constituted the state of Karnataka, as a result of States reorganisation in 1956.

In the South Kanara district and Kollegal Taluk of the Coimbatore District, which later became part of Karnataka, the Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection Act of 1955, and Madras Cultivating Tenants (Payment of Fair Rent) Act of 1956 were in force. The former act was to see that tenants would not be evicted at the will of the landlords.⁵⁷ However, the failure

to cultivate the land, or even the use of land for non-agricultural purposes would be sufficient ground for loss of tenancy rights. The Act of 1956 confined mainly to prescribe the rate of fair rent.

Hydrabad State, after its accession to Indian Union passed Hydrabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act in 1950, with the objectives of improving the status of tenants, to limit the size of holdings, abolish absentee landlords, and to preserve the land holdings of genuine agriculturists. The Act distinguished two types of tenants: Protected and Asami Shikmis. The Act declared that the tenants who had been cultivating lands continuously for six years, were to be treated as Protected Tenants, and conferred special rights and privileges including the right to purchase land from landlords in easy terms.⁵⁸ Subletting and subdivisions were prohibited. It laid down the conditions on which tenancy could be terminated and the Government could assume the management of land. However, in practice some of the tenants yielded to the pressure of landlords and surrendered their rights. The Act was amended in 1951 with the objective of improving the status of tenants of Ijara villages. Gradually this type of leaseholders became a class similar to the Zamindars of Uttar Pradesh

and Bihar. To stop the eviction of tenants, The Hyderabad Prevention of Eviction Ordinance was promulgated in 1952.

At the time of reorganisation, The Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act 1948, with the amendments of 1952 and 1955, was in force in the areas of Bombay Karnataka. The Act recognised two types of tenants - permanent and protected. It provided special rights to protected tenants to purchase land at reasonable price, the payment of which could be made in easy instalments. There were provisions for the assumption of land for personal cultivation, commutation for crop shares, abolition of cess, fixation of ceiling areas, and fixed rent.

With the objective of safeguarding the interests of Inam lands, Mysore State passed The Alienation Villages (Protection of Tenants and Miscellaneous) Act in 1950. The Act aimed at controlling the eviction of tenants, reduction or suspension of rent, control of alienation of reserved lands, and control of appropriation of agricultural lands for non agricultural purposes. The Inam Abolition Act was passed in 1954, which aimed at the abolition of major inams in the State. To intensify further the process of abolition, the Government passed The Mysore (Religious and Charitable) Inam Abolition Act in 1955 to cover all

the religious Inams, particularly Devadaya and Dharmadaya Inams.

At the time of the reorganisation of State, Coorg was the only State that did not pass or introduce any tenancy law.

Immediately after the reorganisation of Karnataka, the Government appointed B.D.Jatti committee in 1957, whose recommendations became Karnataka Land Reforms Act of 1961. This Act has been considered the starting point of land legislation, for, it was the first Act to cover the whole of Karnataka. This Act was in many ways one of the typical land reforms acts of 1960s.⁵⁹ Its recommendations covered land ceiling, abolition of tenure, ban on lease except for widows, unmarried women, minors, small holders, disabled persons, and personnel of the armed forces. The rent was fixed at 1/4 of the gross produce in the case of irrigated lands, and 1/5 in the case of other lands.⁶⁰

The contents of the Act manifested the successful pressure brought by the dominant castes and class during the process of legislation.⁶¹ The dominant majority castes⁶² and class sabotaged the land reforms. Hence, the various provisions of the Act provided ample opportunities for landlord to interpret them to their advantage. For

instance, the landlord could assume the land on the ground of personal cultivation or on the ground the tenant failed to pay the rent. Even the concept personal cultivation was so vaguely defined that any person supervising the land was considered as personal cultivator. Further, landed interest managed a high ceiling on land holding (as high as twenty seven standard acres per family of five members). Cash crop like sugar cane was exempted from land ceilings. In fact, the loopholes in the Act increased the number of evicted tenants in Karnataka. For example, the landlord section was able to evict 18.6 per/cent. of tenants upto 1971. The landed section assumed the land under Benami names or transferred them to their relatives, or for personal cultivation.⁶³ It is worth noting that even the implementation of an Act like this was delayed.

By the late 1960s the political situation in Karnataka as well as in India changed drastically. The Congress, for the first time after the independence, split into two groups. In Karnataka for the first time a Government dominated by the backward minority community came into power, which did not belong to the dominant land owning section. Therefore, an amendment to the earlier

land legislation. was brought easily in 1974.

The amendment of 1974 totally banished the resumption of leased out land by the landlords, abolished the tenancy except for the soldiers and seamen, reduced the land ceilings down to ten standard acres,⁶⁴ appointed tribunals in each Taluk to settle the issue of tenants.⁶⁵

However, it helped the large tenants to get more benefits than the small holders, because the exemption given to them in 1961 Act was taken back. Even definition of the concepts 'family' and 'standard holdings' did not alter the status of previous Act. Hence, despite the amendments, the landlord class and rich peasantry retained the big chunk of land. For example, in Dharwar District the land legislations did not alter the position of landed section. (figure I). If the amendment of 1974 came in handy to the rich peasantry and landlord section to retain their class nature, the other Governmental measures like New Technology consolidated their bases.

Distribution of Holdings in Dharwar District 1982-1983 (Figure I)

Acreage	Number
Upto 5 acres	76,775
Upto 25 Acres	34,512
Upto 100 Acres	33,721
Upto 500 Acres	2,170

Source: K.V.Kurian, " Distribution of Land Holdings in Karnataka
Southern Economist, 1 November 1985, p.19.

New Technology in Karnataka

The development of agriculture has passed through three important phases in Karnataka. In the first phase that covered 1951-52 to 1965-66, the economy adopted the Old Production Technology and Old Extention System. In the second phase that ran between 1966-67 and 1977-78, New Production Technology and Extention System was undertaken. After 1978, New Production Technology and New Extention System was adopted in Karnataka.⁶⁶ However, the adoption of New Technology is quite different from the introduction of American Cotton seeds in the areas of Belgam and Dharwar during the nineteenth century by the British. It was more of the first category. But even prior to the introduction of High Yielding Varities during 1960s , the mechnisation process was slowly developing in agriculture (see figure II). This demonstrates the slow development of capitalism and class of rich peasantry. However, as elseshere pointed out, this New Technology is area specific and class specific which leads to disparities within its own region. For example, the net area irrigated as a per/cent of net area sown, was 21 per cent for Karnataka as a whole while it is 60 and 25 per cent

for Shimoga and Gulbarga districts, respectively. The per hectare consumption of chemical fertilizer was 3.3 Kgs for the Karnataka as a whole, whereas in Gulbarga it was 3 Kgs, and in Mandya 104 Kgs.⁶⁷ The percentage of High Yielding Varieties to net area sown was about 23 per cent for the Karnataka as a whole, and 65 per cent for Shimoga, 3 per cent for Gulbarga and 9 per cent for Bijapur. Moreover, rich peasantry was also the main beneficiary of many other Governmental measures like land development programmes and irrigation development. Their Class for itself action exploded when the balance of profits of 1960s tilted in late 1970s. This was expressed in the form of a movement under their leadership.

Total Number Of Agricultural Instruments in Karnataka

(Figure II)

Year	Ploughs	Carts	Diesel Pumpsets	Electrical Pumpsets
1951	21,20,000	6,15,606	4,411	3,050
1956	22,64,743	6,54,112	5,628	5,481
1961	24,95,517	6,93,756	10,087	12,433
1966	25,53,019	6,88,549	24,575	27,054
1972	25,06,663	6,74,955	43,003	1,58,877

Source: Ksheerasagar, Dikku Thappida Bhoosudgarane, (Bangalore, 1985), p. 112.

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for arrears of revenue was to be banished ii)no man
was deprived of property simply on the ground of
slavery or being a slave iii) no court in future
enforce rights arising out of the alleged possession
of slaves iv) no discrimination in the persecution of
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except in South Kanara where the tenancy problem was
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a Chairman being the Assistant Commissioner, Tashildar being the secretary, the local MLA and three non-official members one of whom belonged to Scheduled Caste.

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CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE RYTHA SANGHA IN KARNATAKA ; 1980-85

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In July 1980, the first spontaneous peasant movement erupted in and around Malaprabha Command Area in North Karnataka. This was the region where Karnataka Government formed a North Zone Irrigation system to speed up the irrigation programmes in 1967. This zone covers seven Taluks spread over three Districts - Bailahongala, Ramdurg, Savadatti (Belgam), Badami (Bijapur), Gadag, Hubli, Nargund, and Navalgund (Dharwar).¹

Before the massive project was taken up, the percentage of irrigated area was very small. The percentage of irrigated area in relation to land sown in 1973-74 was, for Savadatti 0.6 per cent, Nargund 5.9 per cent, Navalgund 2.6 per cent, and Rone 1.0 per cent. After the Malaprabha project it increased to 23.5 per cent, 69.6 per cent, 44.8 per cent and 34.6 per cent respectively. This area is also well known for cash cropping. The experiments done in nineteenth century reveals the fact that the peasants were ready to accept new varieties of seeds,² and slowly a class of rich peasantry emerged. In recent years this tendency was complemented by the introduction of New Technology. Under land reforms, the rich peasantry

retained a big chunk of land not only in these areas (figure I) but also in other districts, especially Shimoga, Bellary, Chickmagalur, Mandya, and Hassan, where the Rytha Sangha was formed and found its strong bases.³ However, after the commission of Malaprabha project almost all indigenous crops were replaced by the High Yielding Varieties of Cotton, Wheat, Jowar, and Maize.

Land Holdings by Size, Class, and Area (Hectares) Figure I)

Size Class	Dharwar		Belgam		Karnataka	
	No(%)	Area(%)	No(%)	Area (%)	No(%)	Area (%)
Upto 2.0	37.9	10.4	52.2	14.3	54.1	15.6
2.0-5.0	35.3	26.8	28.4	27.6	27.9	27.2
5.0-10.0	17.8	29.4	13.1	17.8	11.8	25.8
Above 10.0	9.0	33.4	6.3	30.3	6.2	31.7

Source : Dr. B.K.Narayan, " Government and Problems of Malaprabha Ryots", Deccan Herald, August 1, 1980.

Objective Conditions in 1980

In recent years there has emerged a tendency of depending on market inputs for the farm. The proportion

of industrial inputs (chemical fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides and diesel oil) has increased two folds. At the national level, inputs have increased from 15 per cent (current prices) in 1970-71 to 37 per cent in 1980-81. During the same period, in Karnataka this has increased from 16 per cent to 30 per cent. Measured at constant prices with 1970-71 as the base year, the increase was from 15 per cent to 32 per cent in India, and from 10 per cent to 25 per cent in Karnataka. This was further compounded by an increase in the relative prices of these inputs. This was not compensated by an increase in the output prices during the same period. This has resulted in the relative decrease in profit margin and an increase in the cost per unit. Thus the total inputs (excluding labour) as a proportion of output at constant prices increased from 20 per cent to 27 per cent between 1970-71 and 1980-81 in the country as a whole, while it has increased marginally from 21 per cent to 23 per cent in Karnataka, during the same period. Even in Malaprabha area, the prices of inputs in recent years have increased. For example, between 1977 and 1982 the prices of pesticides, tractors, petrol and bullock carts increased by 18 per cent, 26 per cent, 88 per cent and 167 per cent respectively at current prices.

Price Increase in Pesticides (Per Litre) (Figure II)

Particulars	1977(Rs)	1980(Rs)	1982(Rs)
Endosulphon	64.00	80.00	75.00
Ekalux	94.00	105.00	115.00
Democrofe	158.00	158.00	180.00
Zolone	-	78.00	80.00

Source : H.D.Hanchinal, "Socio-Economic Problems of Farmers Under Malaprabha Area" Southern Economist, November 1987, p. 47.

Price increase in other Inputs (Figure III)

Particulars	1977(Rs)	1980(Rs)	1982(Rs)
Tractors: Only Engine			
i)Zetor, H.M.T	52,000	58,000	62,000
ii)Massy Furguson	62,000	70,000	82,000
iii)Good Bullock Pair	3,000	5,000	8,000
Power Spray	-	8,00	1,500 to 1,800
Petrol(Per Litre)	4.00	-	7.15

Source: H.D.Hanchinal, Op cit.

The rapid industrialisation process is presumed to absorb the excess of labour on the land, as a result of which pressure on the land will be reduced. However, the development of capitalism in Indian agriculture has not shown any significant decline in the labour force. Every year twenty million persons are being added to the work force that depends on agriculture. This phenomenon leads to reduction of average land holdings and, an increase of unprofitable land holdings (figure IV). For example, according to Agriculture Census, during 1970-71 and 1976-77 the number of holdings in the size category of less than 0.5 hectares increased from 23 millions to 30 millions.⁴ It is obvious that when the holdings become unprofitable, the cost of cultivation increases because overheads can not be adequately covered by a shrinking scale of cultivation (figure v)

Distribution Of Land Holdings In Different Size Groups
In Karnataka (Figure V)

Size Groups (Hectares)	1970-71 percentage of holdings	1976-77 percentage of holdings
0- 2	54.08	51.50
2-4	22.25	26.71
4-10	17.40	16.53
10 above	6.27	5.23

Source: N.G.Chachadi, "Land Reforms and Distributive Justice in Rural Karnata", South-ern Economist, November 1, 1981, p.19.

Expenditure and Income From Paddy Land (Per Acre)
(Figure V)

Expenditure		Income	
Particular	Cost(Rs)	Particular	
Bank Repairs	85-00	From 35 Mooras	
Watering Fields	45-00	of Rice	4200-00
Seeds	400-00	By selling	
Ploughing	790-00	Grass	150-00
Labour	614-00		
Fertilizer	1000-00		
Tools	100-00		
Pesticides	75-00		
Supervising (Rs 10 for six months)	1800-00		
Total	4914-00		4350-00

Source: Govinda Ramesh, " Namage Sikkuudeshttu", Mungaru,
July. 6, 1986.

Further, the decline in the percapita relative income became a frustrating thing to the peasants. The

proportion of agricultural income and work force depending on it has not uniformly spread, creating disparities. As between 1970-71 and 1980-81, for example, the proportion of income from agriculture at current prices declined in India from 48 per cent to 36 per cent but the work force declined by 10 per cent (from 70 per cent to 60 per cent) during this period. In Karnataka in the former case it declined from 57 per cent to 44 per cent but in the latter case it has declined by 2 per cent (from 67 per cent to 65 per cent).⁵

The price factor in and around Malaprabha area evoked the feeling of deprivation. Long back in 1972, the Government promoted the cultivation of long staple Varalaxmi cotton that yields a profit ranging from Rs 5000 to Rs 6000 per acre.⁶ The boom soon lasted when the prices of this crop crashed from Rs 1000 per quintal in 1974-75 to Rs 350 in 1978-80, ruining many peasants who had diverted their lands to this crop with the anticipation of higher returns.

The immediate problem, which the peasants confronted, was the imposition of betterment levy⁷ and water tax⁸ even before the lands were irrigated. The betterment levy varied between Rs 700 and Rs 1500 per acre, and the water tax in the case of cotton was raised from Rs 18

to Rs 50 per acre. Till then it was more or less fixed at Rs 18 for all crops.⁹

Much before the peasant movement in Nargund and Navalgund areas of Dharwar district, "The Union of Agricultural Labourers" was more active taking the issues of agricultural labourers. When the problems of the peasants began to increase the union started uniting the peasants of Nargund. However, when Devaraj Urs, the then Chief Minister of Karnataka, visited these areas, a memorandum requesting for the abolition of betterment levy was submitted.¹⁰ Disappointment soon gathered with the toppling of Urs Government and a "Convention of Peasants" was called that ended in the formation of the "Malaprabha Samanvaya Samiti (The Co-ordination Committee of Peasants of Malaprabha Commond Area)". Under the leadership of V.N. Halketti, Hosakeri, Yavagal, and Kuppannavar this committee became very strong¹¹ and, the agitation in Nargund started on 19th June 1980 with a hunger strike. However, the police firing on the peasants on 21st July 1980, who came to submit the memorandum to the Tashildar triggered the peasant movement in Karnataka.

The immediate demands of the peasants covered the abolishment of betterment levy, water tax, fair

12
 prices, medical facilities etc. But in reality
 betterment levy was considered as the primary demands of
 the peasants. However, there are reasons to doubt
 the betterment and water tax were the real provocations
 behind this movement. Firstly, increase in the land value
 was nowhere near to the magnitude of levy as a result
 of irrigation. The levy was just Rs 27 per year per acre
 for twenty years and at the same time the value of the
 land had risen from Rs 10000 to Rs 15,000. But the
 Tashildar of Daudatti . S.R.Hubli claimed that the
 total amount collected was as low as Rs 3400.¹³ Secondly,
 it was also argued that the abolition of betterment levy
 would benefit those who do not want the official
 recordings of the qualitative change in land due to
 irrigation.¹⁴

As the movement spread, various demands began
 to come to surface. Dharwar peasants demanded the
 compensation to their lands.¹⁵ Hasan peasants' demand
 covered the establishment of agricultural college, iron
 industry, reduction in prices of essential things.¹⁶
 In total, the demands varied from abolition of betterment
 levy, reduction in water taxes, higher prices for
 farm produce, writting off of agricultural loans.¹⁷

exemption of land revenue for dry lands upto 10 acres, subsidy on farm inputs like fertilizer, pesticides, fixing of support prices,¹⁸ payment for confiscated lands etc.¹⁹

Immediately after the eruption of the movement, the Government came with certain concessions to the peasants. It declared its intention to write off the taccavi loans of small and subsistence peasants,²⁰ declared Rs 30 crores relief programme, suspended the agriculture income tax except for plantation and commercial crops, taxes on tractors was to be abolished, betterment levy was suspended, penal interest on Co-operative and Land Development Bank loans were waived for large holdings, ~~subject~~ subject to the condition that the repayment should be made before December 31, 1980,²¹ and collection of land revenue upto 10 acres of dry lands was also abolished.

At this moment the Government headed by Gundu Rao appointed two committees to study the problems of peasants.²² One was known as Bangarappa Committee that was suddenly wound up.²³ Another Committee under Bommaiyya²⁴ came out with some proposals. The recommendation of this committee covered among other things: i) the government purchase of cotton directly from the peasants ii) the sanction of loans at a low rate of interest to the peasants, who were affected

by the Malaprabha Commond Project; and iii) a 10 percent government subsidy to the peasants of the state to facilitate them to purchase chemical fertilizers.²⁵

When the movement began to spread to other parts of Karnataka, the Marxists who were involved, failed to turn this movement into an issue of class conflict.²⁶ This was largely attributed to the lack of committed cadres and the left organisation in the movement. This paved the way for the Rytha Sangha of Shimoga to take up the leadership and it formed Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha.

The Rytha Sanghas arguement in defence of the Movement

As the Rytha Sangha assumed the leadership of the movement it came out with certain arguements in defence of the need for a strong movement. These arguements essentially pointed out the unfavourable terms of exchange between the agricultural produce and the industrial goods. The industrial policy of the industrial class as well as that of the Government, according to the Rytha Sangha, literally meant the exploitation of the peasantry. The manipulation of this overall policy was obvious in industrial goods pricing, pricing of agricultural produce, government tax policy, rate of interest on loans provided to the peasantry etc. The overall effect of this

policy reduced the peasantry to the status of bonded labourers and kept them under perpetual poverty.

The Rytha Sangha considered that behind all these evils lies the attitude of the Government towards the peasantry. That is why the Rytha Sangha concluded that its main enemy was the Government. Hence the need for a movement.²⁷

However, this argument is too simplistic in its formulation, for, it unfolds certain inherent contradictions especially if one analyses the movement in the light of the demands made by them on priority lines. Nowhere in their argument Rytha Sangha used the term "class conflict" for the reasons that leaders believed in the principles of class harmony of Gandhi.²⁸ However, their argument was a typical argument of 1940s movements in other parts of India, which called the struggle as a struggle between "India and Bharath".

Phases of Development of the Movement under the Rytha Sangha

Under the leadership of the Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, the movement quickly spread to other parts of Karnataka. However, it is difficult to divide the developments into tight compartments because few demands

were running through out the five years of the study. This enabled the development of contradiction, juxtaposition of demands and the addition of new demands as a camouflaged factor. Broadly speaking the movement can be divided into three phases: (i) 1980-83- Evolution of an organised movement, (ii) 1984 - Evolution of a definite political outlook, and (iii) - 1985 - Phase of renewed movement.

Phase I ; 1980-83: Evolution of an Organised Movement

This phase is important for two reasons. Firstly, clear cut demands of the movement and its class character began to expose; and secondly, movement was intensified to such an extent that Gundu Rao's Government was routed indirectly by the peasants in the elections.

Initially the Rytha Sangha submitted a memorandum to the government, which consisted of 19 demands. Generally, these demands represented the interests of the entire peasantry with special emphasis on its lower stratum. Eleven demands were accepted by the Government. However, when the Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha came out with its "Charter of Nineteen Demands" it continued to include in it the charters of demands already accepted. Interestingly, the contents of some

of the items underwent drastic change. Some items were fresh addition to the charter which did not figure in the memorandum submitted previously . It was on the basis of this "Charter of Nineteen Demands" that the movement was carried forward. The contents of "Charter of Nineteen Demands" are given below:

- i) Cases against the Satyagrahis must be withdrawn,
- ii) Debts of the farmers as shown in the ledgers of Land Development, Co-operative and, Commercial Banks should be written off.
- iii) Farmers should be given loans directly without the intermediary banks at 4 per/cent and, penal interest should be abolished for the agricultural sector.
- iv) All the movable and immovable properties confiscated by the financial institutions against the default~~s~~ must be returned.
- v) The amount of loan given to the farmers must increase in proportion to the rising cost of cultivation.
- vi) Land Revenue, Betterment Levy, Water Tax and Agricultural Income tax must be abolished. Taxes should be imposed on the produce and not on the land. Water rates must be brought down to 1972 rates.
- vii) Prices of agricultural produce must be scientifically assessed and fixed on the basis of man hours involved in

- cultivation, cost of cultivation and the cost of inputs as it is done in industrial sector. Government must buy all the produce of the farmers at fixed prices.
- viii) Industrial produce should not be sold at more than one and a half times the cost of production and the valuation of man-hours, the margin of profit in industrial sector and the agricultural sector must be same to achieve parity in prices.
- ix) Agriculture must be declared as an Industry. The agricultural labourers must be given all the benefits given to labourers in the Industry.
- x) Old-age pension after the age of fifty five to all farmers and a wage policy must be evolved with the scientific price policy for agricultural produce.
- xi) Landless labourers must be given all the cultivable lands which are in the custody of the Government and the Government must finance the cultivation of these lands. Small industries must be established to recruit the landless labourers for production.
- xii) Tenants coming under the land reforms laws must be granted full occupancy rights free, without the payment of occupancy price or any other subsequent payment to the Government.

- xiii) Land-Owners loosing land under the land reforms must be given compensation in lumpsum directly.
- xiv) Crop Insurance Scheme must be introduced without any payment of premium by the farmers.
- xv) Eighty per/cent of the plan expenditure must be earmarked to eight per/cent of the people who live in the villages to improve the roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, rural industries and agriculture.
- xvi) At least fifty per/cent of admission opportunities in professional and other schools and colleges, and employment opportunities in public services and undertakings must be reserved to the children of farmers.
- xvii) The Purchase-tax for Sugarcane must be abolished.
- xviii.) Electrical Power must be supplied to the farmer at six and half paise per unit. The farmer should be asked to pay only for the power used without fixing any minimum charges.
- xix) All restrictions and taxes on tractors and trailers must be abolished.²⁹

Before the fall of Congress Government in Karnataka, two important issues had brought an open conflict between the Government and the movement. One of the issues was related to the repayment of loans. Karnataka

Rajya Rytha Sangha argued that the peasants were, in reality, not the debtors but creditors to the government, as the latter had undervalued the produce of the former for the past so many years. Hence, according to the Rytha Sangha, these loans were only book loans. In 1981, Gundu Rao's Government ordered recovery of the loans but it received poor response.³⁰ Government ordered the prompt persecution of the defaulters and even sent armed detachment along with the revenue officials to seize the movable property. When High court ruled³¹ that such actions were beyond the existing laws, the government paid no heed to it. At this moment the peasantry under the Rytha Sangha adopted protest methods like rely hunger strike, dharna, rasta roko etc,³² Several peasant, during this struggle, met with draconian police action and over 120 peasants were killed.³³

When the forcible attachment and confiscation of property was in full swing during mid 1982 the Rytha Sangha carried out constant confiscation agitation.³⁴ The agitators took to themselves the task of exposing corruption in the bureaucracy. Hence, during the agitation luxurious articles were removed from the houses of officials paraded in the streets and handed over to authorities for investigations since these could be acquired

according to them, only through illegal way.³⁵

The inventory of such confiscated materials were made on the spot.³⁶

Other aspect of the confiscation agitation was the reconfiscation programme whereby articles of the peasants were forcibly taken back from the Co-operative stores and rooms and handed over to the actual owners. This was carried out under a section of the Co-operative Act (enacted by the Britishers) which prohibited the confiscation of such articles necessary for the livelihood of the defaulters.³⁷

Another conflict with the Government came when Government failed to keep its promise of a revision of the procurement policy of the paddy that led the paddy growers to expect more prices to their grains.³⁸ Their expectation soon shattered when the Government announced that 50 per/cent of the grain must be sold at their lower fixed prices. Further, it announced that the 50 . per/cent was not of the just marketable paddy, but including that which the peasant kept for his own consumption.³⁹ At this moment the Rytha Sangha tried to sell the paddy in other parts of Karnataka,⁴⁰ where the prices of the paddy in the market was higher than the Government price.

This dissatisfaction continued even upto 1985⁴¹. In some places like Agumbe in 1983⁴² and Sakaleshpur in 1984, the Rytha Sangha members destroyed the levy gate⁴² that was established to contain the intra-state movement of paddy. However, at this moment Rytha Sangha argued that ^{the} Government was following dual policies in which it imposed restriction on the free movement of the agricultural produce while not applying the same rule on the industrial goods.⁴³

The Rytha Sangha managed an agreement during 1983 in favour of the rural people. But the advantage of this agreement was very much localised. It picked up the issue confronting only one area that is, Kanakapura. As a result of an agitation the agreement was signed between the quarry warrers and the villagers providing Rs 100 for each cubic metre as royalty for granite slabs quarried in this place.⁴⁴ The amount so collected from royalty was to be used for the developement of the area. Most of the granite quarried was exported to Europe and Japan for use in tombs. In Kanakapura a sum of Rs 80 per cubic metre of granite is paid as royalty to the Government. The export price of this granite is on an average about five thousand rupees per cubic metre. The Rytha Sangha organised a massive agitation in October - November

1982 to prevent local resources being indiscriminately looted on such unequal terms and thousands of peasants were arrested. An agreement with the Government was also reached that no further contracts would be given and, once the existing contracts expired full and local control over these resources would be instituted.⁴⁵ This process was to lead to as Prof. Nanjundaswamy, convenor of the Rytha Sangha said, "Socialisation and Nationalisation of resources."⁴⁶

On the issue of non repayment of the arrears by the /sugar Mills in Karnataka the Rytha Sangha sided with the sugarcane growers saying that the Mills had to pay Rs 30 crores in arrears to the peasants. The question of fair prices arose when Government decreased the sugarcane price from Rs 210 per tonn during 1981-82 to Rs 180 per tonn in 1982-83. In fact, this problem arose due to an over production of the sugarcane in Karnataka.⁴⁷ Government argued that mills are owing Rs 1.74 crores⁴⁸ rather than Rs 30 crores. Peasants used different means like locking the factory from the behind in Mandya,⁴⁹ and sitting dharna in the conference hall of Vidhan Soudha.⁵⁰ Finally the Government conceded to their demands of paying arrears and made a slight increase in the price of sugarcane.

Another issue that the Rytha Sangha solved was related to the shares of the sugar factory installed by Mysore Paper Mills. Initially, the Mill sold the shares on the condition that the peasants should pay Rs 250 at once for a share of Rs 1000 and later on they could pay the money in instalments along with an interest of 12 percent.⁵¹ The Rytha Sangha came to an understanding with the mill that the price of a share would be decreased to Rs 10 and peasants would be given an opportunity to purchase shares at any time and, provisions were made for them to purchase more share due course.⁵²

Phase II : 1984 - Evolution of A Definite Political Outlook

In this phase the Rytha Sangha tried to become a political force in Karnataka. But the defeat of its "independent candidates" in elections, and the sharp realisation of its actual strength made a n impact on the future programmes.

The Rail and Rasta Reko agitation that started with the beginning of the new year, was basically to focus on the unfulfilled promises of the Government. The Rytha Sangha criticised the Janata Government for not appointing mobile doctors, not destroying Eucalyptus,

not giving fair prices to agricultural produce, not distributing the lands free of cost to the tenants and landless labourers, and not establishing Cottage and Village industries.⁵³ Government had become urban biased by establishing big industries and by planting Eucalyptus.

However, when the Rytha Sangha declared its intention to start the Rail and Rasta Roko agitation on various demands these demands were not new to the movement.⁵⁴ Some of the fresh demands were: i) abolition of Bangalore Development Corporation ii) Common fence to agricultural lands in Malnad region, iii) decentralisation of natural resources; iv) an increase in the percentage of reservation to the children of peasants from 50 per cent to 80 per cent; v) writing off of loans on poultry, cows, cattles, and cart; vi) re-evaluation of Planing policy; and vii) abolition of the third stage of Kaveri water supply to Bangalore.⁵⁵

Paradoxically, when Government called the Rytha Sangha to the negotiating table, the latter put seven pre-conditions which were unacceptable to the Government. These conditions covered :a) setting up of a State Agricultural Price Commission b) removal of the prohibition to transfer fragmented lands; c) stoppage of entering

the houses of farmers and making attachment of their movable properties in the guise of recovery proceedings; d) grant of lands to the landless and small land holders wherever they have already encroached it; e) abolition of use of police power to arrest without warrant; f) abolition of use of force against unarmed Satyagrahis and g) freedom of trade and commerce.⁵⁶

The Rail and Rasta Roko agitation which started on the eve of Republic Day⁵⁷, continued for eight days in different parts of Karnataka and in many places like Hasan, Chickmagalur, Shimoga, Belgam and Manday⁵⁸ peasants detained buses and rails. Nearly 32,000 peasants courted arrest.⁵⁹ The agitation attracted the attention of the masses.

Governments' unconceding and uncompromising stance gave a different dimension to the struggle. The Rytha Sangha's anger against the Government increased when the officials started snatching Green Towels and Green Boards⁶⁰ which the Rytha Sangha considered as the symbol of peasant unity and solidarity. This led to the coinage of the slogan "Janata Chalejau" (Quit Janata).⁶¹ The Rytha Sangha argued that, like the previous Government, this Government has also lost the morality to continue in the power for the reasons that the Government is becoming anti-mass and anti-peasants. They argued that the best way

to make the Janata Government to realise its mistakes, was through pressurising the legislators by sending questionnaires.⁶² Those who opposed the peasants' cause be gheroad with a demand for his or her resignation.⁶³ However, those who supported the peasants' cause should be pursued to join the movement.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, it was a simplistic calculation as they gheroad many legislators, in vain.

Long before the Loka Sabha elections, a definite attitude towards politics was slowly emerging within the Rytha Sangha. This tendency was the reflection of Vaivasayagal Sangam of Tamil Nadu which formed a political party in 1982. Long back in 1983 itself the Rytha Sangha made a scathing attack on the legislators dilly dallying for power and demanded their resignation.⁶⁵ In one of the statements Rudrappa, the then president of the Rytha Sangha, appealed to the independent and opposition members of the legislative assembly not to bend to the Congress(I) temptation which might be offered to them and support Kranti Ranga- Janata alliance for a stable Government in Karnataka.⁶⁶ Even in 1984, the executive committee of the Rytha Sangha demanded the reinstallation of N.T. Rama Rao as the Chief Minister of Andra Pradesh.⁶⁷

At the time of assembly elections in 1983, the

Rytha Sanghas stand was clear that it would not contest the election saying that the representatives of people have demoralised the democracy.⁶⁸ However, its intention of contesting the election became obvious when Prof. Nanjundaswamy, made it clear that the " Rytha Sangha is considering the option of entering into politics".⁶⁹ The conclave that was called in Bangalore on 2nd October 1984 under the banner " Construct New Karnataka" became the focal point of the forth-coming election. This conclave ended in the accusation that Janata Government and the legislative members were becoming unresponsive to the peasants' cause. They were treating the peasants as mere voting creatures.⁷⁰ At the time of parliamentary election the Rytha Sangha argued that ^{the} political parties and the politicians were responsible for the rot in all walks of life. The Political parties instead of upholding the peasants were nourishing the interests of capitalists, industrialists, black marketeers, toddy tappers etc. in exchange for the donations given to the parties. The Rytha Sangha concluded its arguments saying that the following election was the best means available to overthrow the parasites and thereby assert peoples' authority.⁷¹

The Rytha Sangha at the time of the Loksabha election sponsored voters' councils in order to



democratically elect the "right candidates"⁷² who would be accountable to the people. It fielded seven candidates-⁷³ yet sticking to its stand of not entering politics directly- five of the candidates taught at universities, and interestingly, described them as "sons of farmers".⁷⁴ Significantly all of them forfeited their deposits.

Reaction to this experiment came from within saying that the Rytha Sangha jumped into election fray without adequate preparations. Leaders were charged for indirectly helping the Congress (I)'s victory in the election. This resulted in the serious introspection at the state level meeting, and finally, a decision was taken that the Rytha Sangha cautiously continue the experiment.⁷⁵

Phase III : 1985 : Renewed Movement

In the third phase the Rytha Sangha tried to re-emerge as a force from the shocks it received in the elections, and an opportunity came its way with the adoption of an amendment to the Co-operatives Act in 1985.

Amendment to the Co-operatives Act came when World Bank and NABARD cautioned that all is not well in Karnataka. These institutions cautioned that they would

find it difficult to lend further credits to financial institutions in Karnataka if 60 per/cent of the credit is not recovered from the defaulters. When Government passed the amendment, a strong reaction came from the side of Rytha Sangha.⁷⁶ Under this amendment, the Government got free hand to attach the property and stand in a bid as an individual to purchase the lands of the default peasants and distribute it among other peasants.⁷⁷ The Rytha Sangha argued that the attachment of the property should be stopped for the reasons that there was no more upper strata among the peasantry.⁷⁸

Dissatisfaction was expressed in the form of "Long March to Bangalore" that began on 2nd October and culminated on 1st of November with an address to the Government to repeal the amendment.⁷⁹

In recent years the programme of Social Forestry has transformed into Commercial Forestry due to a compromise between the Government and the industrial class. Eucalyptus which according to the Rytha Sangha affected the ecology and, therefore, it asked the peasants to plant sababul and Akasia.⁸⁰ Along with it, the Government's decision to ~~seize~~ the encroached lands also became an issue for the Rytha Sangha. However, its attack on

Eucalyptus dates back to 1982 when its activists destroyed and uprooted seedlings of Eucalyptus.⁸¹

The programme in 1985, continued with the coinage of a slogan "Uproot Eucalyptus" that led the peasants of Kolar, and Mandya to destroy the saplings of Eucalyptus in Government nurseries.⁸² In quite a few cases, for every Eucalyptus tree that was uprooted, an oil seed or turmeric or a fruit bearing or shelter giving tree was planted.

The different phases of the development of the movement under the Rytha Sangha as we have seen above reveals the fact that the movement has experienced ups and downs. This can not be attributed to any single factor underline the movement. The ideology, class composition, class character etc. of the Rytha Sangha are the basic elements that shaped the development of the movement.

1. Deccan Herald (Bangalore), 29 July 1980.
2. Britishers introduced American Cotton in 1845.
See Imperial Gazetteer of India, Bombay Presidency (New Delhi, 1985), p.
3. See Appendix I
4. Kripa Shanker, "Should Agricultural Prices be Raised", in Sunil Sahasrabudhey, ed., Peasant Movement Today (New Delhi, 1986), p. 126.
5. Deccan Herald, 15 November 1985.
6. Vijaya Kumar Gidnawara, Varalaxmi Hybrid Cotton (Dharwar, 1979), pp.70-71.
7. According to the section 37 of the Karnataka Irrigation Act of 1957 the betterment levy is an amount towards the recovery of capital cost invested on an irrigation project. It is equal to one half of the difference between the market value of the land before the date of commencement of construction, restoration, expansion or alteration of the irrigation project and market value after the completion of such construction, restoration and expansion or alteration. Betterment levy is exempted to irrigated works benefitting 100 acres or less.

8. According to the Karnataka Irrigation (Levy or water rate) Rules of 1965 (rule 3), after the construction of an irrigation work water is supplied or made available for the purpose of irrigation and those who benefitted from the project due to the supply of water a levy called water tax is charged. The water rate is charged on the basis of the crops grown on the lands, irrespective of the irrigation work and is therefore is charged for every crop taken from the land. Different water rates have prescribed for different crops and it ranges from Rs 80 for sugarcane to Rs 8 for manurial crops. The water rate is charged on a sliding scale: no water rate for the first year, one fourth for the second year, one half for the third year and onwards. Towards the maintenance of the irrigation work the Government levies a maintenance cess of Rs 4 per acres of lands benefitted, by the work (rule 4).
9. Deccan Herald n.1.
10. Prajavani, (Bangalore), 29 July 1980.
11. Statesman (New Delhi), 31 October 1980.
12. Deccan Herald, n.1.
13. Prajavani, 16 October 1980.
14. Narendra Pani, "Reforms to Pre-empt Change- Land Legislation in Karnataka (New Delhi, 1985), p.98.

15. Prajavani, n.13.
16. Ibid.
17. Indian Express (New Delhi), 14 October 1980.
18. Deccan Herald, 26 September 1980.
19. Ikya Ranga(Bangalore), 10 August 1980.
20. Narendra Pani, n.14, p.98.
21. Statesman, 31 October 1980.
22. At this time Karnataka Government appointed a commission under N.P.Kempegauda to enquire the Nargund incident. It recommended the prompt action against the culprits and the police officials . See Prajavani, 23, August 1980
23. The recommendation of Bangarappa Committee covered
i)reduction of water tax and betterment levy upto 50 percent. ii) support prices for the agricultural produce iii) withholding payments for two years to the Co-operatives, Commercial banks and to the Government iv) 9 percent interest for the loans given to the peasants v) Forest Development Scheme for the employment of the rural poor vi) the abolition of sales tax on chemical fertilizers, food grains etc. For further details see Prajavani, 31 September 1980.

24. He was a Janata Legistlator. See Prajavani 22 August 1980.
25. Prajavani 17 October 1980.
26. There were allegations against Hosakeri, a suptuagenerian Gandhian and the Convener of the Malaprabha Co-ordination Committee saying that he received huge amount of money from the Governement and therefore he abruptly cancelled the movement. However, he declined the allegations saying that, "I know agitation and strikes and not the politics". See Lankesh Patrike, (Bangalore), 12 October 1980.
27. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Lokasabha Chunavane-Mathadarara Vedike Pranalike (N.P, N.D).
28. Top Leaders like Prof. Nanjundaswamy , Convener of the Rytha Sangha is a Lohiaist, Rudrappa, the then President of the Rytha Sangha was formerly associated with Congress. See Lankesh Patrike, 25 January 1981.
29. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Charter of Demands of Karnataka Farmers (Shimoga, N.D), pp.1-5.
30. In some places like Ranjadhakatte, Megarahalli of Shimoga district peasants declined to repay the loans. They resolutely opposed the operation of recovery of loans and twice they made the Government officials and the Special forces to retreat from the villages. See Lankesh Patrike, 4 April 1982.

31. Court also ruled that except the materials of daily use the officials could attach the property of the defaulters. However, the things used for daily use was decided long back in 1942. But now they have become essential things. See Lankesh Patrike, 4 April 1982.
32. Prajavani, 29 April 1982.
33. James Manor, "Blurring the Lines Between Politics and Social Basis," Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 19, No.37, 15 September 1984, pp. 1626-27.
34. During the same period an agitation better known as Gokak Agitation for introducing Kannada as a compulsory language was at the peak. Rytha Sangha at this time did not keep silent. It used the means of gheroing the legislators and a written pledge from them. Rajashekar of Bhadravathi constituency gave a written pledge that he would vacate the assembly seat if the Gokak report was not made compulsory and implemented. Rytha Sangha members gheroed Divakar, the sitting M.L.A of Thirthalli constituency. See Lankesh Patrike, 25 April 1982.
35. Prajavani, 17 April 1982.
36. B.Krishnarajulu, " The Karnataka Peasant Movement: Its Role in 'Identity Formation'", (Seminar Paper, Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi, 2-4 February 1984), Pp. 1-8.

37. Prajavani, 29 April 1982.
38. Peasants were also hit hard by the levy system. They were forcibly made to sell their paddy to the rice mills and were denied to keep paddy more than the required one. The peasants, to prepare rice from one or two quintals had to get the written permission from the village accountant. See Lankesh Patrike, 31 January 1982.
39. James Menor, n.33.
40. For example in Thirthahalli the marketable price of paddy was Rs 135 per quintals. But in Someshwara, just a few miles away from Agumbe of Shimoga district paddy was selling at Rs 170 per quintals. See Lankesh Patrike, 13 February 1983.
41. H.S.Rudrappa, "Letter to Basavanyappa - Minister for Food and Civil Supplies," (Shimoga, July 1985).
42. Prajavani, 19 January 1984.
43. Ibid.
44. Deccan Herald, 2 May 1983.
45. J.K.Suresh, "Response to Technology in the Peasant Movement in Karnataka", (Seminar Paper, Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi, 2-4 February 1984), p.4.

46. Deccan Herald, 9 August 1983.
47. Prajavani, 7 August 1983.
48. Prajavani, 15 August 1983.
49. Prajavani, 10 August 1983.
50. Deccan Herald, 9 Novemebr 1983.
51. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Rytha Bhandavare, Shimoga, 10 December 1983.
52. Ibid.
53. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Raste Thade- Rail Thade Chaluvalli (Shimoga, N.D).
54. Prajavani, 3 January 1984.
55. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, n.53.
56. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha , Bahiranga Patra Eradu Sarkaradondige Mathukathege Elamshada Sharattu Eke? (Belgam, N.D).
57. Prajavani, 30 January 1984.
58. Deccan Herald, 28 January 1984.
59. Prajavani, 8 February 1984.
60. This idea was given by Narayanaswamy Naidu of Vaivasayagal Sangam of Tamil Nadu. The green towels have become not only the symbolsof non-violence but also unity among the peasants. See Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Janavari 26, 1984, Rytharinda Rail Thade, Raste Thade Chalavali - Rytha Satyagrahigala Nadavalike Hegirabeku (Shimoga, N.D).

61. Deccan Herald, 8 February 1984.
62. The questionnaire be answered either right or wrong. The ten questions that put to legislators included
 i) It is right or wrong for peasants to assemble for a meeting ii) organising satyagrahis iii) for the police to continue firing on satyagrahis iv) summon and arrest without warrant v) to confer lands free of charge the encroachment made by the landless vi) continue the land fragmentation vii) continue free trade of farm produce viii) attach movable properties of the peasants ix) land distribution x) appointment of an Agricultural Price Commission.
 See The Hindu (Madras), 7 March 1984.
63. For example Muthanna, Ananda were gheroad.
64. Deccan Herald, 3 March 1983.
65. Deccan Herald, 9 June 1983. Also see Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, March 15, 1984rinda Rytha Virodhi Shasakarugala Virudda Dharani Matthu Gherau (Shimoga, March 1984).
66. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, 1983ra Shasanasabha Chunavane- Rytharige Thiluvaike Patra (Shimoga, N.D)
67. Prajavani, 23 August 1984.

68. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Rytha Huthathmarige Gaurava Sallisalu, Hosa Karnataka Kattalu, Bangalorena Kabbon Parkinalli October 2, 1984, andu Rythara Brhahath Samavesha (Shimoga, N.D).
69. The Hindu, 12 November 1984.
70. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, n.68.
71. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, n.27.
72. Voters' Council assured the peasants that in Lok Sabha its struggle will be mainly concentrated on i) abolition of Agricultural Price Commission, controlling the prices through the establishment of Agricultural-Industrial Price Commission, lifting the ban on the storage of levy and its movement ii) employment of the rural masses through small scale industries and irrigation iii) all facilities of industrial labourers to agricultural labourers and providing free house, education, medical care, pension etc iv) change in the five years plan and an equality in development v) ceilings on industrial and commercial property vi) creating a rich country through rich and prosperous villages. See Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Loksabha Chunavane- Mathadarara Abyarthiya Geluu -Nimma Geluu : Nagarada Balakedarara Jithadalugalige Halliya Utpadaka Jithadalugala Manavi (Shimoga, N.D).

73. Hasan, Chickmagalur, Kanakapura, Shimoga, Bidar, Belgam and Kanara.
74. Sachidananda Murthy, "Hegde Leading the Fight Back," The Week (Kottayam), Vol.3, No.8, 10-16 February 1980, p. 25.
75. Ibid.
76. H.S.Rudrappa, "Letter to Chief Minister and all the Ministers;" (Shimoga, 14 July 1985).
77. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Badukua Hakkina Rakshanegagi Rythara Bhoomi Haraju Raddhu Madalu Vidhana Saudahkke Rythara Padayathre October 2, 1985rindha November 1, 1985 1985ra Varage (Shimoga, N.D).
78. Ibid.
79. Mungaru (Mangalore), 2 November 1985.
80. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Neelagiri Keeliri (Shimoga, N.D).
81. Anil Agarwal, "In the Forests of Forgetfulness", Illustrated Weekly of India, 13, November 1983, pp. 22-24.
82. Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

CLASS CHARACTER OF THE MOVEMENT : AN ANALYSIS

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Peasant movement has been viewed from two different angles: those who participated in, and supported the movement feel that it was a struggle between the urban and rural forces, a movement for self respect, independent movement of the rural people and a struggle for decentralisation.¹ Others who view this movement from the class angle argue that it was a movement of 'kulaks' or the rich peasantry.² The Rytha Sangha disagree with this latter argument saying that when compared to commercial entrepreneurs and beauraucrates the existence of the rich peasantry is half truth.³ Their argument becomes very simplistic because of the fact that they do not compare them with the other categories of the peasantry and with the rural masses. This type of contradictory argument has been used to manipulate and create false belief among the peasantry. By their manoeuvre they wanted to avoid any sort of rural discontentment or the conflict that could loosen the grip of the rich peasantry. This became true when Rudrappa, the then president of the Rytha Sangha wrote a letter to the Agriculture Price Commission saying

that "we should not give room for any more discontentment for the rural people ⁴". This was a sheer compromise and a sort of an alliance with the Government for their benefit.

The rich peasantry's interest dates back to the immediate explosion of the discontentment and subsequent emergence of the Rytha Sangha and its nature to change demands of the peasantry in the original memorandum. When the Rytha Sangha clubbed the demands in the form of the Charter of Demands, which became the revolving point for their future movement, they changed many old demands and added new ones. In their seventh Charter of Demands the Rytha Sangha demanded an increase in the price of some of the agricultural produces which were at lower price in the memorandum. The price of the wheat when compared to memorandum was brought down from Rs 250 to Rs 200, demand for the price of maize was increased from Rs 150 to Rs 200 and, demand for the price of cotton was increased from Rs 600 to Rs 1000. Prices for sugarcane or for paddy nowhere appeared in the original memorandum but later on they were included. The demands for the pension of the agricultural labourers was not clearly specified by excluding age limit in the memorandum. The concept of peasant or ryot was changed to include landless labourers to substantiate the

the argument that the Rytha Sangha also stood for their interests. The biggest change in the Charter of Demands was made with the inclusion of payment of compensation to the landlords who lost their lands due to the land reforms. In the case of reservation for peasant population the original demand was that fifty seats should be reserved for them, but this quota was increased to a demand for fifty percent. The nineteenth demand of the memorandum of the peasants which stressed that the "rural roads must be made travel worthy, the money collected by the sugarcane cess must be used to give farmers better funds" was totally excluded from the Charter of Demands.⁵

Throughout the five years the Rytha Sangha, as was the case with other peasant organisations of the 1980s in India, constantly was struggling to meet two important demands. They were i) writing off of loans
ii) remunerative prices for the agricultural produce.

Argument for the writing off of loans was on the claim by the Rytha Sangha that the peasants of Karnataka owe only Rs 180 crores to the financial institutions and to the government. In between 1966 and 1980 the peasants produced about 200 crores worth quintals of food grains of which roughly about 100 crores

worth quintals were sold in the whole sale market. Due to the lack of appropriate price policy, the peasants lost money value ranging between Rs 3000 and Rs 4000 crores⁶ and these loans were nothing but books loans and hence to written off since they had paid it in multiplier.

However, it was argued that the Karnataka government had nothing to do with the working of financial institutions as most of these institutions were under the direct control of the Central government. Even these institutions could not function properly without the recovery of sixty per cent of credits. The financial institutions like banks lend money only on some conditions like i) the peasant should have at least two acres of cultivable lands and be the owner of the land ii) the peasant should be willing to adopt improved and modern techniques of production iii) the farm proposed to be financed should have irrigation facilities. iv) the farm should be free from all liabilities in connection with farm⁷ operation etc. In this connection the upper strata of peasantry benefitted from such financial institutions as these lent loans because of their accessibility to power. The poor peasantry got suffered (figure I). Therefore they sometime depend

Gajanur Co-operative Society, Shimoga District, 1982.

(Figure I)

Category of peasants	No. of peasants	Total amount of loans (Rs)	Loans per category
Rich peasants	63	326500-00	5182-53
Middle and Poor peasants	117	191900-00	1640-17
Agricultural labourers	240	68110-00	283-00

Source: G.Rajashekar, "Shimogga Rytha Chaluvaliya Thathvika Niluvugalu", Sahkshi, October- December 1982, pp 397-98.

on the rural rich for credits thereby becoming a prey to a sort of semi-feudal relations.

Despite the fact that the Rytha Sangha leaders and the upper strata of the peasantry were the biggest debtors,⁸ they tried to oppose the governmental measures of attaching the property of defaulties by counter measures like confiscation and reconfiscation of property. In

opposing amendment to the Co-operative Societies Act the rural rich feared that it would alter the balance of power in the rural side as the government had the sole authority to distribute the lands of the defaulters after failing to recover the loans. Their class interest became clear when the rich peasantry repaid a small amount compared to other categories of peasantry. During 1983-85 while the recovery of loans from the small peasants has gone up from 45 per cent to 55.28 per cent, in the case of the rich peasants it had dropped from 65.45 per cent to 55.93 per cent.⁹ However, the government refused to submit to the demand for abrogating the amendment.

Another issue on which the Rytha Sangha concentrated its agitation was that of the fixing of the remunerative prices. It contended that there was a dichotomy in the prices of agricultural and industrial goods. It claimed that the Agricultural Price Commission¹⁰ fixed the prices for agricultural produces but this was not done for industrial goods however, and hence the artificially inflated prices to their commodities. It demanded the government to fix the price on the basis of man hours, cost of living and standard of living.¹¹ It further argued that the price of industrial goods should

not to be allowed to increase over one and half times its cost of production and, also withhold marketable produce for sometime. This in due course according to the Rytha Sangha leads to the increase in the prices of agricultural products and wage levels. However, during the course of movement the Rytha Sangha, despite the appointment of the Agricultural Advisory Committee by the Government, demanded the appointment of separate Agricultural Price Commission for Karnataka, but its demand was not conceded.

Their claim to fair price of the agricultural produce was based, as we have explained earlier, on the disparity in prices between the agricultural produce and industrial goods. It is argued that if the price is determined by the laws of the market competition, whereby agricultural goods price on par with the prices of industrial goods is decided, the agriculturists will fare well in the competition. However, the experience of past twenty years (1951-1966) show that the increase in the prices of the agricultural produce affects chiefly the economy of the country.¹²

Similarly their claim that manhours also should be taken into account while fixing the prices of the agricultural produce, is based on the class bases of the organisation. This is clear from the following example:

if it takes for the poor peasant to cultivate one acre of land for 30 man days (man hours converted into man days) the market price of the jowar fixed would be low. For example, if the price per quintal is fixed for Rs 500 it would benefit more the rich peasants who, because of their access to superior technology would plough it within 10 days. The agricultural labourers, and poor peasantry will loose in the competition. They have to buy the same jowar for higher prices from the market, and their profit from the cultivation of jowar will be very less. This may lead to further strengthening the bonds of semi-feudal relations. However, the arguement of the Rytha Sangha that increase in the prices of agricultural produce leads to an increase in the wages of labourers can be refuted by pinpointing that during 1964-65 and 1974-75 in Karnataka the increase in the farm prices did not mark a corresponding increase in the money wages of the agricultural labourers.¹³

During the course of the movement a particular issue pertaining to only some parts of Karnataka was taken up. For example, in demanding the prices to sugarcane they tried to woo the sugarcane growers of Mandya and Shimoga, where the rich and middle peasantry control the the sugarcane cultivation (see figure II),

Area under Sugarcane in Shimoga and Mandya Districts
(Figures in Hectares) (Figure II)

Size Class	Shimoga	Mandya
Below 0.5	79	688
0.5 - 1.0	379	1805
1.0 - 2.0	880	3709
2.0 - 3.0	748	2629
3.0 - 4.0	546	1651
4.0 - 5.0	339	1038
5.0 - 10.0	700	1745
10.0 - 20.0	284	469
20.0 - 30.0	56	101
30.0 - 40.0	48	65
40.0 - 50.0	17	5
50.0 and above	37	15
Total	4113	13922

Source: Tabulated from the Census of Agricultural Holdings
in Karnataka 1970-71, pp 238-259.

When the Rytha Sangha members locked the doors of the sugar factory from the back¹⁴, demanded the nationalisation of sugar factories¹⁵ and stopped the flow of sugarcane for curshing, the poor peasantry became the worst sufferers of the movement. In some places peasants were compelled to sell their sugarcane to a mere price of Rs 100 (the then prevailing price was Rs 180) to the rich peasantry to escape from the total bankruptcy of their economy.¹⁶

In their Charter of Demands the Rytha Sangha argued that the agricultural tax should not be imposed on the produce but only on the land. That is fallow lands were not to be taxed. But in Karnataka the fallow lands are largest in size class and they are more than two and half times the proportion of the lowest class (see figure III). However, other demands like the abolition of levies, taxes on tractors, reduction in the unit prices of electricity, declaration of agriculture as an industry indicate the rich peasant orientations of the Rytha Sangha.¹⁷ If all their demands were met, the benefits would also have filtered down to the middle peasantry. But their share is less compared to the rich peasantry.

Size Class wise Current Fallows in Karnataka (Figures in
Hectares) (Figure III)

Size Class	Current Fallows
Below 0.5	5,593
0.5 - 1.0	17,166
1.0 - 2.0	57,124
2.0 - 3.0	53,183
3.0 - 4.0	44,539
4.0 - 5.0	42,820
5.0 - 10.0	1,47,666
10.0 - 20.0	1,41,249
20.0 - 30.0	53,004
30.0 - 40.0	23,484
40.0 - 50.0	9,962
50.0 and above	15,997
Total	6,12,787

Source : Tabulated from the Census of Agricultural Holdings
in Karnataka 1970-71, p 151.

Another feature that has been attached to this movement is that is not only tried to consolidate and fight for class interest but also for caste interest. The two dominant castes in Karnataka - Lingayaths and Okkaligas - dominated the political scene for a long time. When Devaraj Urs staged a silent revolution changing the edifice of the caste hegemony in late politics. These two caste groups made an unsuccessful attempt to regain the lost position during Gundu Rao's period (1980-83) (see figure IV). However, the Janata Party disillusioned them again. Therefore the Rytha Sangha tried to regain its hold by making an effort to entering into legislature. But they were thoroughly defeated in the election.¹⁸

MLAs and MPs according to Religion and Caste in Karnataka from 1978 to 1985 (Figure IV)

Caste/Community	1978	MLAs			MPs		
	1978	1983	1984-85	1977	1980	1984-85	
Okkaliga	42	48	49	7	6	5	
Lingayath	53	66	64	8	4	6	
Brahmin	16	16	11	4	2	3	
Scheduled Caste	3	33	33	4	4	5	
Scheduled Tribe	4	5	6	-	-	-	
Christrian	3	3	3	-	2	1	
Jain	3	2	3	-	-	-	
Muslim	17	2	9	2	3	2	
Other Hindus	52	50	47	3	7	6	
Total	225	225	225	28	28	28	

Source: Tabulated from Karnataka Backward Classes Commission Report, volume III, 1986, p.71.

Class Composition of the Movement

When the peasant movement exploded in the Malaprabha Comond Area the alliance of different categories of peasantry and landless labourers was already established. The left forces working within the Malaprabha Co-Ordination Committee failed to make it an issue of class conflict because of the absence of strong organisational base. This opporutnity was seized by the Rytha Sangha of Shimoga district which tried to keep the whole movement under its hegemony. Therefore, any act of laws passed with the objective of helping the poor peasantry and landless labourers was opposed with a single voice. As Rudrappa, the then President of the Rytha Sangha, commented: "We can not divide outselves into landlord and landless farmers and agitate seperately, for the agitation will have no strength nor will carry any weight."¹⁹ In opposing plantation of eucalyptus seedlings the apprehension was expressed that it would cause ecological imbalance. But underneath that apprehension is the fact that it will free the big peasants' dependence on the labourers, and reduce the average work available to landless labourers.²⁰ This might have two adverse imprints on the rural side: (i) it increases the percentage of rural unemployment and (ii) demand may come from this section for further effective land reforms.

In fact this class alliance was initially carried out by manipulating the issues like i) creating a false belief among the landless labourers that they are part of the categories of the peasantry ii) through the rural development programmes like mass marriage²¹, settlement²² of the local issues by the activists etc. These went a long way to create an impression that the Rytha Sangha stood for the total transformation of the rural society. Therefore, landless labourers, and poor peasantry initially actively participated,²³ courted arrest, sacrificed their life and became the driving force behind the Rytha Sangha, thinking that this movement under the Rytha Sangha would bring about a change in their way of life.

The manipulative handling of the movement by the Rytha Sangha brought to the fore the inherent contradiction among various classes of peasantry including the landless labourers, which resulted in the inevitable separation of landless labourers and poor peasants from their alliance. Middle peasantry knowing the fact that the benefits from this movement would also filter down to them did not break the alliance and the movement. However, when alliance was about to break up the rich peasantry tried to maintain it through force. They did not even hesitate to impose fines on those who did not participate

in the movement.²⁴ The Rytha Sangha leaders assaulted the agricultural labourers for disobeying their orders to work in their fields although this was not a general practice.²⁵

The disillusionment and conflict came to fore at three different stages : i) during the time of the assembly election and parliamentary election; ii) at the time of the split and formation of new Rytha Sanghas and; iii) nonparticipation of the poor peasantry and landless labourers in the movement in the inter stages. The defeat of the Rytha Sanghas "independent" candidates in the parliamentary election demonstrates the fact that class alliance of the poor peasantry and the rich peasantry could not succeed in further manipulating the issue. The defeat was a manifestation of the contradiction inherent in the unsafe class alliance between rich peasantry and poor peasantry.

The first organised drift came when the peasants of North Karnataka under C.M. Revanasiddayya formed a Rytha Sangha under the banner "Karnataka Rajya Rytha Mattu Rytha Koolikarara Sangha" (Organisation of the Peasants and Agricultural Labourers of Karnataka).²⁶ The immediate issue that caused the formation was on that of participation of Rytha Sangha in assembly election in 1983. But in

reality the majority of the peasants were dissatisfied with the Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha for its indifference towards the problems of dry farming peasants and their regional cultivation like cotton, Jowar, maize, ground nuts etc.²⁷ This formation gave impetus to the formation of other Rytha Sanghas in Karnataka. The Bada Rytha Sangha (Poor Peasants' Association) was formed in 1983 with the exclusive demand for the poor peasants.²⁸ The Akila Karnataka Sanna Maththu Athi Sanna Rytha, Kooligarara Sangha (The Association of All Karnataka Small Agriculturists and Wage Labourers) was formed to represent the interest of lower strata of peasantry and labourers.²⁹ But these organisations failed to intensify the struggle between the different categories of the peasantry and also smash the strong holds of the Rytha Sangha. The political attitude towards the Janata³⁰ and the absence of clear-cut ideology affected these organisations.

In some districts, in times of the peasant agitations the Dalits and the Lanbanis,³¹ though agricultural labourers,³² refused to participate in the agitational tactics of the Rytha Sangha due to the class based character of the movement. Nevertheless, the Rytha Sangha continued to retain its holds over the majority of the peasants. But

its agitational policy of class harmony, based on Gandhian ideology, diffused the revolutionary potentiality of the landless and poor peasantry. It is an irony that even the newly emerged Rytha Sanghas failed to exploit this potential revolutionary situation.

Ideology and Tactics of the Rytha Sangha

The peasant movement has developed three main ideological currents: i) Marxian ii) Nationalist iii) Social Reformist. Recently Gandhian ideology, a fourth dimension to the ideological currents has been added to this category.³³ The fourth dimension has become the focus of the Rytha Sangha's ideology as the leaders were Gandhian Socialists and, outright advocates of class harmony.

Whatever may be the Rytha Sangha's belief in the Gandhian ideology, its concept and understanding of the State goes in support of Socialist ideology.. It believes that even after the independence of the countries the colonial masters still carry on exploitation, in one or another form, in the ex-colonial countries.³⁴ India is not exception to this rule. The consequence of the continued exploitation is the persistence of inequality among the nations. The modern imperialist countries once colonial

powers have systematised the exploitation of the ex-colonial countries through dumping "secret" technology and increasing the prices for their commodities and, thereby they made the dependent countries to develop 'Lean Capitalism'. On this basis, they came to analyse the Indian situation, however, with two modifications in the specific historical situation of India. They saw inequality in India through caste and class factors which are interrelated. Inequality stemmed from the unequal distribution of property owned by the microscopic upper caste which they identified as also upper class. Since the Indian industrial class is not able to compete in the world market, the Indian people and indigenous market constitutes a source of capital formation for this nascent industrial class. The industrial class, they argued, exploit the people and amass profit through three different ways:

- i) purchasing the raw materials at a lower price
- ii) paying minimum wages to the labourers and
- iii) selling the products at an exorbitant rate.

The industrial class has made the peasants the "productive slaves". Industrial labourers and salaried people have become the "consumer slaves" of the industrial class. This 'Lean Capitalism'

has dwarfed the development of the agriculture through the slow development of irrigation and unfair prices to agricultural production.³⁵ Thus, though the Rytha Sangha believed in the exploitation of the industrial class, it did not pick up those issues of conflict between the industrial class and the rural population, except in the case of Eucalyptus, where it tried to intensify the struggle, but succeeded only partially. Even Gandhian tactics that "seek not to destroy the capitalist but to destroy capitalism"³⁶ were nowhere clearly, and vigourously advanced with the fear that this would lead to the questioning of their class character and, eventual attack on their class bases.

One of the techniques adopted by the Rytha Sangha in the course of its struggle was controlling the entry of the government officials into villages. This was done by placing green boards and specifying date and time for the entry. This was also against the norms of satyagrahis who underwent sufferings to change the hearts of his enemies in a non-violent way. This gives an impression that each and every village becomes an independent unit from the main stream of India.³⁷ By this strategum the Rytha

Sangha hegemonised the peasants. By the sign of green boards the peasants were prevented from making or having transactions with the government officials. However, the idea of a separate village unity based on the powerful class alliances of the rich, the middle and poor peasantry was not advocated vigourously and hence posed no threat to the established authority for, it feared the violent consequences of the advocacy of such idea in Karnataka.

1. Krishnarajulu, "Karnatak Ke Rytha Andolan ,"
Mazdoor Kisan Neethi Vol.1, Nos 5-6, June 1986, pp.11-18.
2. See Statesman, 31 October 1980 and Deccan Herald,
29 July 1980.
3. G.Rajashekara, "Shimogga Rytha Chalavalia Thathvika
Nelegalu," Rujuvathu (Mysore), Vol.10. No.8, October
1980, p.368.
4. H.S.Rudrappa, "Letter to the Chairman- Agricultural
Price Commission," (N.P,N.D).
5. See Appendix II
6. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Charter of Demands of
Karnataka Farmers (Shimoga, N.D), pp. 6-7.
7. V.G.Rao and Paramjith Malya, Agricultural Finance by
Commercial Banks (New Delhi, 1980), p.42.
8. For example, Sundaresh, the then Secretary of the Rytha
Sangha owed Rs 23,000 to the Co-operative Society.
Another leader Vijeyendra Kamath of Gajanur village
owed Rs 12,500 to the Co-operatives. See Prajavani,
24 October 1985.
9. A.E. Punith and U.A. Uttar, "Farmers' Agitation :
Opposing Loan Recovery, " Economic and Political Weekly,

Vol.21, No.1, 11 January 1986, pp.63-64.

10. Agriculture Price Commission was set up in 1965 to provide a scientific price for the agricultural produce.
11. C.P.Sunitha, "Will Farmers' Movement Help Small Peasants," Southern Economist Vol.22, No. 13, 1 November 1983, p.42.
12. Prajavani, 20 July 1986.
13. Ibid.
14. For example in Mandya peasants locked the doors of sugar factory. See Prajavani, 15 July 1985.
15. Rythu Sangha demanded the nationalisation of Chamundeshwari Salarjung, and Tungabhadra sugar factories. See Prajavani, 30 August 1985.
16. Prajavani, 18 October 1985.
17. Narendra Pani, Reforms to Pre-empt Change- Land Legislation in Karnataka (New Delhi, 1983), p.100.
18. Deccan Herald, 15 November 1985.
19. Lalitha Natarajan, "Farmers' Agitation," Economic and Political Weekly Vol.15, No.47, 22 Nov. 1980, pp.1967-68.
20. Note on Social Forestry, Social Scientist Vol. 11, No. 12, December 1983, p.62.
21. Namma Nadu (Bangalore), 30 August 1985.
22. Prajavani, 13 May 1982.

23. Prajavani, 11 May 1982.
24. For example in Sulegale village of Hassan district the Dalits were attacked. See Lankesh Patrike, December 1984.
25. For example in Harelli of Hasan district separate utensils were kept for Dalits in arrack shops and hotels . Two Dalits- Hoovanna and Puttayya were assaulted for not obeying the dictates of Rytha Sangha leaders. However, Puttayya succumbed to **attack**. See Ibid.
26. Prajavani, 3 May 1983.
27. Prajavani, 3 March 1983.
28. Its immediate demand was the extension of the date of repayment of loans than other things. See Prajavani, 14 July 1983.
29. Its demands covered a minimum loans of Rs 5000 to peasants to enable them to purchase seeds, fertilizers and implements. Loans should be made to recover in easy instalments with a minimum interest on long term basis. It also demanded fair prices to all farm products., and also amendment to the Co-operative Societies Act. See Deccan Herald 29 March 1984
30. Karnataka Rajya Mathhu Koolikarara Sangha supported Janata candidates during Lok Sabha elections. Bada

Rythha Sangha was considered to be the mouth piece of Janata Government. See Lankesh Patrike, 13 June 1982, and also see Prajavani, 3 May 1983.

31. Prajavani, 11 May 1982.
32. When some journalist pointed out to Rudrappa in 1981 that despite the majority of agricultural labourers in Rythha Sangha they were denied of the leadership. Rudrappa replied that " if the leadership emerge from that class we will accept their leadership". See Lankesh Patrike, 25 January 1981.
33. Pūshpendra Sūrana; Social Movements and Social Structure A Study in the Princely State of Mewar (Mewar, 1983), pp. 142-43.
34. Here it sounds with the initial arguement of Communist Party of India.
35. Karnataka Rajya Rythha Sangha, Lokasabha Chunavane-Mathadarara VEDIKEYA PRANALIKE (N.P,N.D).
37. See Prajavani, 26 January 1985 and also see Deccan Herald, 24 January 1984.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha is the first of its kind in Karnataka to take up the issues of almost all categories of the peasants. The development, ideology, and leadership patterns of the Rytha Sangha reflects a partial understanding of the objective conditions and, the contradictions inherent in both the movement and the society. The Rytha Sangha's leadership of the movement is marked by too frequently shifting demands, polemical arguments, hypothetical calculations etc, which are basically rooted in confused Gandhian tactics.

Despite the tight grip of the rich peasantry, the movement, however, changed the whole gamut of understanding of the peasantry in its socio-economic and political dimensions of Karnataka; that the peasantry is passive, conservative, could be cowed down to the whims and fancies of the bureaucrats and of the politicians. This movement brought to the surface the underneath sufferings of the peasantry and released the arrested peasant's spirit however not to the extent of becoming a thorough class based struggle in the rural areas. Nevertheless, the understanding of the reality by the peasantry positively

helped in raising the bargaining power that went in a long way in cancelling the income tax on all cereals or production, the development tax upto Rs 1500 per acre, the taccavi loans of five acres of land, the sales tax of chemicals from 3 per cent to 2 per cent etc. In this capacity the movement has become a self respect movement of the peasantry, which was reflected in their attitude against the corrupt officials, red tapism, suppression of the sathyagrahis etc. Nevertheless, this movement under Rytha Sangha did not release the actual revolutionary potentiality of the peasantry due to the advocacy of the philosophy of class harmony and class collaboration, but it educated the peasantry on their plight, poverty and their conditions

Except in South Kanara, North Kanara, Bidar, Gulbarga, Coorg, Raichur, and Bangalore Urban, the movement spread to thirteen out of twenty districts of Karnataka. This is but natural that the Rytha Sanghas' interests were concentrated in such places where the rich peasantry has become a powerful dominant class due to the introduction of new technology and the agrarian structure which favoured them. In other parts the acuteness of tenancy, the non viability of holdings etc. did not favour them aso as to penetrate vigourously

These differences led to the differentiation of the peasantry and discrimination by the Rytha Sangha that got reflected in the split and, also the separate existence of strong Pranthiya Rytha Sanghas supported by the left parties in some pockets of Karnataka. The priority of demands of different Rytha Sanghas always stood subsumed under their different ideological professions. For example, the interests of the Karnataka Pranthiya Rytha Sangha, a branch of the All India Kisan Sabha, were always the minimum wages to the landless labourers,² provision of pensions to the agricultural labourers, the distribution of surplus lands to the landless etc.³ But this priority is an anathema to the Rytha Sangha, for, if granted that could jeopardise its basic class interests. Hence the demands of the plantation workers, ceilings on plantation etc. were deliberately left out from the movement itself.

However, the movement under the Rytha Sangha is one among the many movements staged by the rich peasantry during 1980s in different parts of India. Their origin in recent years dates back to 1970 and 1973 when the Kheti Badi Union of the Punjab and the Vaivasayagal Sangam in Tamil Nadu started agitation solely demanding remunerative prices, reduction in electricity charges etc. These

movements received an impetus when the rich peasantry of Karnataka under the Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha and Shetkari Sangathan in Maharashtra began to play the tunes of the other peasant organisations demanding even in post 1985 era, solutions to their twin problems of remunerative prices and writing off of loans.

The ideological orientation of economic exploitation became the central issue around which the different movements revolved. This orientation came from Sharad Joshi, the leader of the Shetkari Sangathan, with the slogan of "Bharath versus India". Sharad Joshi argues that 'Black Britishers' in post independence era not only replaced the white Britishers but also continued the tradition of exploiting rural people. However, the techniques used by 'India' in contradistinction to the British exploiters, to exploit the 'Bharath', that is, the rural populace are: unfair prices, low procurement policies, inadequate support prices, dumping imported goods in the local market with the gift received in large quantities such as P L 480 etc. The eradication of poverty in 'Bharath', it is advocated, can only be possible by withholding the outflow of capital and giving remunerative prices to the agricultural products. But not all the peasant

organisations subscribed to this argument. For example, the peasant organisation like the Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha believed that the eradication of poverty also lies in the transformation of the rural masses and villages through the welfare programmes like mass marriages, education against intoxication,⁴ adjudication of rural disputes in the local panchayats etc. This difference though not very sharp is one of the elements of the typical ideological hegemony over the rural masses and for the existence of different peasant organisations of the rich peasantry in different parts of India. However, the suggestion made in 1980 in Hyderabad that all organisations should work under one platform of Indian Farmer's Association went overboard soon with the emergence of differences in the understanding of the society.

The adoption of techniques like picketing, gheroing, long march, dharnas etc. by the Rytha Sangha and other organisations is distinct from the methods of strike, because they hardly disrupted the markets, the supplymarket etc. Yet this in reality is to focus the attention that it is not the mode of production but the relation of exchange that is important. Nevertheless, their dissatisfaction is always represented in a non-violent way.

At the organisational level the peasant organisations can be divided into two groups: Under the first group there are organisations with clear-cut organisational structure like committees, sub committees etc. The Rytha Sangha belongs to this group. The other group functions with informal organisation that takes up the immediate issues concerning the peasantry. For instance the Shetkari Sangathan in Maharashtra. However, within these organisations no lower class of peasantry was given a chance to climb the ladder of leadership and dictate the terms to the rich peasantry. But it is interesting to point out that the leadership of the rich peasantry can cut across the boundaries of provinces and regions. That became true, when Shreed Joshi picked up the demands of Nippani tobacco growers in Belgam in 1980.⁵ It is a paradox that the Rytha Sangha supported the cause of the Nippani peasants by only paying lip service.⁶ This was intended to avoid any possible conflict among the leaders. The leaders' claim that their organisations are non political becomes a contradictory one, when their counterparts in the Vaivasayagal Sangam in Tamil Nadu formed a political party named 'Indian Farmers and Toilers Party' in 1982 and contested the elections with the agreement that the peasants were deprived of the right to launch peaceful

and independent agitations. The Rytha Sangha also fielded its 'independent' candidates with the aim to clear the rot in public life. A Shetkari Sangathan member contested in Karnataka with the claim that if such participation was avoided then it would mean making way for those who had vehemently opposed the interests of tobacco growers. Nevertheless, one thing is clear with the Karnataka R. jya Rytha Sangha that it has totally banished the membership to any political party or to the politicians. But the attempt of different political parties in Karnataka to attract the peasants to their side was foiled inspite of the fact of the formation of the 'Pragathi para Janathantra Ranga' in 1980. However, other organisations like Shetkari Sangathana allowed politicians to participate in their struggles. The unsuccessful attempt by the different peasant organisations to win the elections demonstrated the fact that the politicisation process did not effectively work and any attempt to do it without any systematic organisation and mass base would be counter productive of their interests.

The movements of 1980s could have become revolutionary one if the leaders had exposed the conflicting interests not only within "India" but also within "Bharath",

Remunerative prices and writing off of loans were not the only problems that confronted the lower strata of peasantry. The peasant leaders themselves did not participate nor extend their support the peasants' struggle in their own provinces. Their indifference became manifest in their total silence on the mechanisation of the agriculture and their exploitation by the traders. This gave an impression to lower class peasantry that there was a class alliance between the rich and the traders. The rich peasantry is aware of the backlash of any movement against one exploiting class since it can spill over and threaten their own interests. The rich peasantry is also oblivious of the forces that once released, will not stop at any particular juncture and these may end up in a demand for restructuring the property relations itself. There were instances when the leaders themselves engaged in land grabbing by employing goondas to smother the resistance of the lower class peasantry.

In rent years the rich peasantry has become a force to reckon with and has introduced a new dimension to the understanding of the rural society. However, despite

the objective conditions obtaining in Karnataka, the pacification of revolutionary potentiality of the peasantry is a marked character of the existing class based peasant organisation in Karnataka.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Rytha Horata Eke? (Shimoga, N.D), p.93.
2. Ikya Ranga, 20 April 1986.
3. Even prior to the land reforms Prnatha Ranga was demanding the distribution of waste land and the surplus land to the landless. See Ikya Ranga 12 May 1968, 25 March 1973.
4. Rytha Sangha argued at this moment that there were two grades of politics in the state. In the first grade politics, the Government takes up the issues of development and try to increase the purchasing power of the people. The second grade of politics is the politics of bankruptcy of the masses. This is done by foul means, enhancing the prices, of intoxications by fraud. It argued for the total ban on the intoxication in the state. However, according to Rytha Sangha, the backward classes do have the right to prepare the arrack for the health purposes from the herbs. See Karnataka Rajya Rytha Sangha, Pana Nirodha Illave Pana Swathanthra, (Shimoga, N.D).
5. Tobacco growers of the Nippani area were exploited by the merchant class. Their main demand was for the

remunerative prices of tobacco produce. This movement led to firing on the peaceful agitators and the death of ten peasants. See C. S. Lakshmi, "Tobacco Grower's one Point Programme", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 16, No. 16, 18 April 1981, pp. 699-700.

6. At this time Rytha Sangha gave a paper statement in which it cautioned the Government that if the Government did not do anything for the peasants of Nippani it would resume agitation in favour of them. See Karnataka Rajya Sangha, Paper Statement (Shimoga 30 June 1983).
7. The Pragathi Para Janathantra Ranga was formed by four parties- CPM, CPI, Congress (U), Lok Dal. Their main demands were: i) release of 89 peasants arrested during the Malabarabya agitation in connection with the Nargund incidents on 23 July 1980, ii) remunerative prices for agricultural produce iii) cancellation of debt of small and marginal land holders iv) moratorium on debts of other peasants v) fixing of Rs 10 as minimum wages for agricultural workers vii) reduction of water rates viii) public distribution system for essential commodities ix) food for work programme in drought affected area. See Ikya Ranga, 25 January 1981.

APPENDICES

Appendix - I

Number of operational holdings and area operated (in some peasant movement affected districts)

(Figures in Hectares) - 1971

Size Class	Shimoga Dist. Total Holdings		Dharwar Dist. Total Holdings		Bellary Dist. Total holdings		Hassan Dist. Total holdings		Mandya Dist. Total Holdings		Chickmagalur Dist. Total holdings	
	No.	Area.	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area
below 0.5	17778	5521	14243	3953	8184	2405	27718	7596	70798	17620	10456	3129
5-1.0	31559	23769	23770	17971	12063	9055	32110	23872	48101	35015	17866	13450
0-2.0	44900	64069	63978	95004	26557	39126	48492	70176	51305	72461	26563	38257
0-3.0	22248	53243	45446	405676	21537	52325	24537	59067	22582	54058	14278	33980
0-4.0	11093	37870	30161	403275	14551	49996	12616	43045	10138	34507	7397	25306
0-5.0	6728	29653	20975	92951	11092	48998	7265	31955	5435	23904	4659	20509
0-10.0	10028	66806	47801	331345	22339	153897	10715	71128	6352	41302	7605	51055
.0-20.0	2408	31359	20406	273630	8987	119911	2595	33783	970	12230	2340	30702
.0-30.0	336	7970	2887	67239	1711	40606	387	9213	89	2076	1435	10320
.0-40.0	108	3671	605	29493	538	18386	133	4473	23	778	149	5212
.0-50.0	27	1186	168	7342	173	7553	39	1690	7	312	77	3367
.0 & above 21	1497	1497	137	9582	152	10893	51	3935	5	373	142	13514
Total	147234	326614	268577	1128661	127834	553151	166658	359933	215805	294636	91967	248781

APPENDIX -II

MEMORANDUM(ORIGINAL) PRESENTED TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
OF KARNATAKA ON OCTOBER 17 1980

1. All the farmers who were arrested in various ryot movements in the States should be released unconditionally. All the cases against them should be withdrawn. The special police posted at Nargund and Navilgund should be called back.
2. The credit policy, support price and levy which have immersed the farmers in 'artificial' loans, including Government loans and bank loans should be waived. And the farmers should get loans at 4% interest. The compound interest policy must be abolished. Ryot should get loans direct without the intermediaries like bank commercial or co-operatives.
3. These agencies which have confiscated properties for non-repayment of loans by ryots must return all the properties.
4. The loan grants should be increased taking to consideration the increase in agriculture expenditure.
5. The land revenue collection is a polegar rule. Only the the produce should be taxed and not the land. The

unscientific illogical land revenue collection must end. The 'fakes' betterment levy must go. The rise in water levy must be reduced to the 72-73 rates. The taxing the land which does not use water must be stopped. The agriculture tax on the farmer who does not earn anything must be completely abolished.

6. The produce economy should be scientifically assessed as it is done in the case of industrial units. The price should be depend on man hours. The Government should buy produce at the fixed rates. For example, Jowar Rs' 700, Maize Rs 150, Cotton Rs 600 to 1000 wheat Rs 250, Tobacco (Per Kg.) Rs 20, Onion Rs 100 Pulse Rs 400 to Rs 500. For other goods Government should agree to fix the rate recommended by the Committee of agricultural experts.
7. The Government should also fix the real price taking into account the price of raw materials and the man hours spent. The Government should then examine the agriculture and industrial product and give equal rates and determine its price and profit. The industrial products' price must not 1 1/2 times that of production expenses including raw materials and productive costs. The chemical fertilizer should be supplied at the

rates in 1973.

8. The Government should declare agriculture as an industry and all the facilities extended to industrialist should be given to agriculture also.
9. Every farmer and farm labourers must get pension
10. Agricultural labourers should be paid wages and other things like industrial worker. Not only the right price for his product but also right wages should be given to farm labourer.
11. The tenant who is given lands should get the rights without payment of occupancy price and the land owner should be paid in lump sum by the Government.
12. The ryots should get crop insurance without payment of premium.
13. Government lands should be given to ryots and the Government should help them to cultivate lands. Farm labourers should be given free house, education, medical aid and should set up small industries to poor.
14. Eighty percent of the Plan expenditure should be spent on village development.
15. All the educational institutions should reserve fifty seats for the sons for the sons of farmer (actually it should be eighty percent).

16. The purchase tax and levy tax of sugar cane paid in 1979-80 and in future should be abolished.
17. For the power supplied to farms the Government should take only six and half paise per unit as in the case of aluminium factories. The farmer should be charged only on power used without fixing a minimum rate. Demand charges should be abolished.
18. All taxes and other levies and other restriction placed on tractors used by the ryots for all purposes should be removed.
19. The rural roads must be made travel worthy. The money collected by R.M.C. and sugar cane cess must be used to give farmers better funds.

APPENDIX -III

TAMIL NADU VAIVASAYAGAL SANGAM- NINE POINT CHARTER OF

DEMANDS 1980

1. Reduction in cost of cultivation : To reduce the enormous rise in the cost of cultivation during last thirty three years after independence the following are to be fulfilled.: i) Electricity is to be supplied free of cost or atleast electricity tariff for lift irrigation should equal to the water rate levied in river irrigation.

The whole day time supply of power with 440 optimum voltage should be guaranteed for agriculture.

2. Debt Relief : Farmers are debt ridden all over India because of the manifold rise in cost of cultivation like price hike in electric charges, fertilizer, pesticides agricultural implements without corresponding rise in the prices of agricultural commodities for the past several years. Direct and indirect taxes by the Government have gone up. In the past both central and State Governments have not only refused to give remunerative prices, but also took all measures to decrease the prices of agriculture commodities whenever there is a slight increase in the market price.

The end result is that the farmer has lost the repaying capacity of loans and his debt is accumulating day by day.

The Central Government owes to the farmers to the extent of Rs 1300 crores due by way of difference in levy prices and market prices. Government is holding 18 million tonnes of food grains stock procured at the rate of Rs 750 per tonn.

Throught India farmers have been given loans to the tune of Rs 5000 crores through Co-operative , Land Development Banks and Nationalised Banks exclusive of jewel loans. The share of Tamil Nadu Farmers is only about Rs 360 crores.

The State and Central Government should write off the loans extended to the farmers through Co-operative Banks, Land Development Bank's loans, Nationalised Banks and other jewel loans extended through the media of the Government. In future Government should be given interest free loans from the above institutions.

3. Price fixation for agricultural products : As pointed out earlier the production cost of all the agriculture produces have become manifold. The price for agriculatural commodities is to be fixed taking into account the cost of cultivation and the requirement

for the maintenance of an agriculture family. For that indices of cost of production and cost of living of an agriculture family is to be maintained. On the basis of these indices the price is to be fixed periodically. Hence for price fixation a Commission should be appointed with the farmers representatives as members. In case price falls below the fixed prices the Government should come forward to procure that on the fixed price.

4. Irrigation facilities : As a first step in the right direction the Government should nationalise all the rivers in India. The Ganga Cauvery link should be given top priority and by diverting those rivers which flow west ward into Arabian Sea to eastern side, which aspect will help the drought hit area Tamil Nadu. As long as the Irrigation facilities are not made available to those areas which don't have the irrigation facilities they should be considered as drought hit areas and the loans extended to those areas should be written off.
5. Problems of Irrigated areas : Crops restrictions are to be abolished. On no account penalty should be levied. Except water rate per acre no other taxes like land development tax, additional cess, local

cess etc. should be levied in irrigated areas. Levying of crop tax, crop income tax are to be given up. Direct or indirect levy procurement, movement restriction of agriculture commodities are to given up once for all.

6. Urban land ceilings : In the Urban Land Ceiling Act provision must be made to exempt lands used for agriculture. The areas of operation of the above act should be strictly limited to the urban limit and should not be extended to the outskirts and master plan areas.
7. Demands for agricultural labourers : For all agricultural operations the minimum wages of Rs 10 for male workers and Rs 5 for females. Eight hours work is to ^{be} ensured. Agriculture economy should be made sound by providing profitable price to the produces, thereby to make the farmers to give wages to the agricultural labourers equal to that of industrial worker.

The Government should come forward with family pension scheme and provide accident benefit scheme from Government funds to the tune of Rs 5000 for injuries , disabilities and Rs 10000 for death due to accidents engaged in spraying pesticides,

bullock carts, tractors, operations etc.

8. Rural Development : The villages are to be provided with free medical education, transport and pucca road facilities, protected drinking water, public toilet which are available in urban areas.

Agr based industries are to be started in the villages and local people are to be given job opportunities.

In all professional colleges and Government services seventy five per cent of the seats and vacancies are to reserved for agrarian community. The rural sector comprising seventy five per cent of the population of this country should be allotted seventy five per cent of the total funds and allotted funds should be fully utilised.

9. Agriculture insurance : The insurance should be extended to agricultural fields covering all agriculture crops, animals and pumpset at every premium.

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