



# **A Historical Perspective of Rural Development and Village Panchayat Scheme in Mysore State**

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**Abstract.** Generally, history was considered to be an account of the king and maharajas and their works. But it is not so. History is the story of mankind; its scope has enlarged to include not only the political achievement of kings and maharaja but all aspects of the life of the people. Great moments of history are not those when empires were built, but those when cherished goals were achieved. Princely State of Mysore was one of the third largest in India. The first four decades of the last century witnessed those momentous events of history when the age old institution of monarchy turned itself into a nursery of democracy. Mysore State was the first Princely State to experiment how to involve people into the art of governance. Mysore was the first Indian State to have a Representative Assembly, a democratic forum in 1881. The Village Panchayat Scheme which was partially introduced in the year 1926-27, was brought into operation throughout the State during the year 1927-28. Mysore State had worked towards alleviating poverty and improving rural reconstruction, public health, industry and economic regeneration, education, culture and fine arts. The majority of the people lived in villages and agriculture was their main occupation. Under the royal patronage, there was encouragement for the rural development, agriculture, industry and education. The administration of Nalwadi Krishna Raja Wodiyar was quite a success in Mysore because he gave more importance to progressive reforms. He took exceptional interest in the rural development. The process of rural development of Mysore State has been examined by scholars. But no works have been focused on the rural development of Princely State of Mysore under Nalwadi Krishna Raja Wodiyar.

**Index Terms-** Princely State Representative Assembly Village Panchayat, Rural Development.

## **I. Introduction**

The Princely State of Mysore was the biggest Princely State in India. The erstwhile Princely State of Mysore consisting of nine districts namely Mysore, Bangalore, Shimoga, Mandya, Chitradurga, Tumukur, Chickmagalur, Hassan and Koral. Princely State of Mysore was a welfare State. More importance was given to the development of State in general and rural development in particular. Development is a multidimensional process which is continuous in nature. It is a process where one



leaves the traditional traits of society, and tries to embark something developmental, new and more often a new perspective to the world. Many scholars and researched such as James Manor (1977), Bjorn Hettne(1978), S Chandrasekhar (1985), Made Gowda (1997), Dr M.BGayathri (1997), Janaki Nair (2012) have focused on various dimension of socio economic and political development that took place in the Princely State of Mysore. The studies have revealed the fact that the Princely State was one of the most progressive and secular state in India. The kingdom of Mysore (1399- 1947 C.E) was a kingdom of southern India founded in 1399 by Yaduraya in the region of the modern city of Mysore. The kingdom, ruled by the wodeyfamily , served as a feudatory of the Vijayanagara Empire until the empire's decline in 1565. Later, during a period when multiple feudatory rulers claimed independence in southern India, the kingdom of Mysore consolidated. TipuSutan's defeated in the fourth Anglo- Mysore war resulted in the British taking over large parts of the kingdom, and ended Mysorean hegemony over the southern Deccan. The British, however, restored the kingdom to the Wodeyar. And the Wodeyars had continued to rule the state until Indian independence in the year 1947. Mysore is fortunate enough to have quite a few good monarchs in history Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar happens to be one among those. It was he who lifted his state to the level of a "MODEL STATE" in the country. It was he who developed it in several sectors to make it progressive and modern one among was rural development. Nalvadi was excessively inclined to do good, and he did it so much as to break all records. Never in history of Mysore had so many enlightened projects been taken up and implemented. Never was so great an economic and social change and rural development had been brought about. For this he did the right things in appointing such enlightened Dewans or ministers who would size up to his expectation they are Sir M Visveswaraiah and Sir MirzaIsmail. The rulers of Princely State of Mysore have built education institution, hospitals, industries; dams and so on for the sake of people and it facilitated development.

## II. Review of Literature

**Bjorn Hettne:** The Political Economy of Indirect Rule- Mysore 1881-1947, published by Ambika publication , New Delhi(1978). This book deals with Mysore history. Hettne shows how in fact the extension of railways and development industries in the state went to increase the benefit of foreign capital while indigenous enterprise suffered for want technical skill, experience and sponsorship. This work is very significant and refreshing. He studied thoroughly the socio- economic development in Princely State of Mysore. A good condition which throws light directly or indirectly on development of Mysore.

**James Manor:** Political Change in an Indian State: Mysore 1917-1955(1977). Manor offers an elaborate account of political development in the state up to reorganization; while the above said work of Hettne's The political Economy of Indirect Rule: Mysore 1881- 1947 offers an excellent account of political and economic development in the State from the period starting from restoration of the administration in Mysore to the independence. But both the studies have not touched upon the rural development of Princely Mysore.



Schandarashekar Dimension Of Socio-Political Change in Mysore, 1918-1940, published by Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi. (1985). This book deals with Socio-Political Change in Mysore from 1918- 1940. The author has done a thorough research about the dimension that led to socio- political change in Mysore during the said period. Mysore as a Princely State underwent certain change after restoration like Non Brahmins Movement, Miller Committee and reaction of Brahmins. He continues to discuss the behavior of press with regard to various developments in Mysore. A good research to be counted.

**Made Gowda:** Modern Mysore State 1881- 1902. A study of Elite , Polity and Society . published by Prasaranga, University of Mysore (1997)- The role of elite is examined in three situations namely Political, Agrarian, Social issues of the time. Another unique feature of this work is that the author has departed himself from the traditional elitist approach to history which ignores the masses in shaping the history. The work does not project the rural development of Princely State of Mysore.

**JanakiNair:** Mysore Modern, published by Orient Blackswan Private Limited, (2012)- has studied that the historical records of colonial India Mysore State. The author has focused on the major princely states like Hyderabad, Kashmir, Baroda and Mysore, with Mysore debatably being one of the most widely researched.

**M.B.Gayathri:** Development of Mysore State, Published by Prasaranga, University of Mysore, (1997) – This book discusses the political development , economic, social and cultural development of Mysore from 1940-1956. The history of Mysore State during this period is almost the history of Jayachamaraja Wodeyar.

The rural development generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic welfare of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. The administration of Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar was quite a success in Mysore because he gave more importance to progressive reforms. His administration is considered as a “Silver lining” for bringing rural development. He took exceptional interest in the improvement of cities, towns, and most important the village. According to him, “the beautification of our towns and cities must be a continuous process. The municipality need not be afraid of spending a portion of its income in making its town more attractive both to the citizen and to visitors. Slum clearance and housing of the poor must go on along with the beautification schemes, they are inseparable . Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar wanted every village in Mysore to have a small park where the villagers could relax amidst the green plants and trees. He wished all the houses and huts to be clean. His view was that if the people get used to the beauty and cleanliness about them little by little then that would influence them to keep their houses clean and nice. He was in favour of every village to possess at least some type of a Handicraft institution or a factory, etc which would encourage the people around to improve themselves as well making the place a small business centre. In this he said, the government would give full encouragement morally and financially to such industries . For this there was a need of village panchayat scheme.



The village panchayat scheme which was partially introduced in the year 1926-27, was brought into operation throughout the state during the year 1927-28. According to dewan Mirza Ismail, the main causes for the failure of schemes of village improvement in previous years were that the village organization had no power to levy taxes and therefore, possessed no assured income. In his address to Mysore Representative Assembly in 1928, he said; “under the new village panchayat regulation, the total annual demand on account of village panchayat revenue is expected to extend rupees 10 lakhs. This with the closing balance of rupees fourteen and half lakhs which the panchayat had at the end of the year at their credit, will enable them to start their existence with ample resources, and they could find no difficulty, with adequate assistance from government and district boards, in carrying on village improvement work on a large scale in future”. The Mysore government in general did not interfere much in the affairs of the local areas. The government trying to be liberal to the progressive image of the State gave a few powers to the local boards. Every some amount of money was kept aside for village improvement scheme. If there was unfavourable seasonal condition, then extra money was sanctioned by the government. In 1926, there was a report that no good work had been carried out under the scheme. The village Panchayat Regulation II of 1926 having come into force from February 1927, village improvement committees ceased to function and their work was assigned to the village panchayat. In that year, the government sanctioned rupees 30,000 for the purpose of village improvement works to be undertaken.

The government wanted the village panchayat schools to progress and expand quickly. For that purpose, the panchayat were allowed to exercise complete control over the school, the function of the education department being limited to more educational supervision and inspection necessary to maintain the required standard of efficiency. The education report shows that by 1932, 142 aided panchayat schools came into existence because of this policy.

The unemployment problem was spreading specially among the educated classes and as new avenues of employment could not be created easily, the pressure on government services continued. Agriculture was pursued by improved methods, is capable of employing large numbers and in addition to creating new industries and occupation, the people should be helped to get better returns from the land. The expansion of public projects work and electrical undertaking all these created employment opportunities were not able to take advantage from these facilities due to lack of organization. There was the village improvement works scheme and also a growing spirit of public benefactions by constructing buildings for charitable and other purpose had increased the growing opportunities of employment. The rural population had, therefore, abundant scope to supplement their earnings. Due to the economic depression in 1930, the government continued its policy of financial stringency. In this situation dewan Mirza Ismail encouraged the Khadi industry. By this farsightedness, Khadi centre was started at Badanval near Nanjangud in November, 1926 which employed a number of people from the surrounding areas. The centre was favourably situated for carrying on the experiment at hand – spinning



in the local variety of cotton that was grown in village round about Badanval. Many other Khadi centres were started at different places in the state. The rural people were encouraged to rear sheep for its wool. DewanMirza Ismail found the wool produced in Mysore was rough and of a lower quality. In order to improve the quality of the wool, sheep rearing centres were established at places like Hebbal, Ajampura, Yelachihalli, Kolar, etc. To help the villagers in maintaining healthy cattle, Dewanmirza Ismail ordered the starting of forty veterinary schools all over the state. DewanMirza Ismail wanted the rural population to come to the cities to find employment in the big industries. But most of the villagers depended on agriculture and cultivation could not come to cities for job. In order to help them DewanMirza Ismail encouraged the starting of handicraft industry in rural areas to subsidize agriculture.

The village panchayat realized the advantage of making use of resources at their disposal and amounts were spent on public works , water supply, lighting of villages , etc. A special feature in the direction of rural development was the starting of the scheme of propaganda for rural welfare in certain selected villages of each district so that those village panchayats might eventually serve as example of good panchayat administration, which the less advanced local bodies might be induced to follow. This system was introduced in 1936. The government in 1937 sanctioned the establishment of rural welfare centre at Closepet. The object of the centre was to carry out intensive work to bring about development in the existing condition of rural life and economy by concentrating attention in compact groups of villages with the assistance and cooperation of the several development departments. The various measures for the rural development was encouraged in the state in respect of sanitation, water supply, medical aid, education, agriculture , industries sanitation, medical relief and public health , control of infant mortality , eradication of malaria, prevention of epidemics , improvement of sanitation, providing better medical facilities continued to receive the attention of the officers of the departments concerned with the cooperation of the local people.

### **III. Conclusion**

In 1933 there were 10,600 village Panchayats in operation. The activities of some of these Panchayats included the supervision and management of village schools, village forest, tanks and purchasing of improved implements of agriculture, sugar mills and letting weekly labours for social work was also insisted upon by the village Panchayats. Cooperative spirit and civic consciousness were quite evident in the way the Panchayat functioned as shown in the liberal donation they made for school, hospitals and other village purposes. The total number of village Panchayats in the year 1930-31 was 10,251 and it increased to 10,600 in the year 1932-33 and it increased to 12,076 in the year 1940-41 . Thus the administration DewanMirza Ismail was quite a success in Mysore because he gave more importance to progressive reforms. His administration is considered as a “Silver lining” for bringing rural development. He took exceptional interest in the improvement of cities, towns, and most important the village. Many researchers, historians and scholars have revealed the fact that the princely state Mysore was one of the most progressive and model



state in India. Even today, the people of old Mysore remember the contribution of Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar and his able Dewans Sir M Visveswaraiah and Sir Mirza Ismail.

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