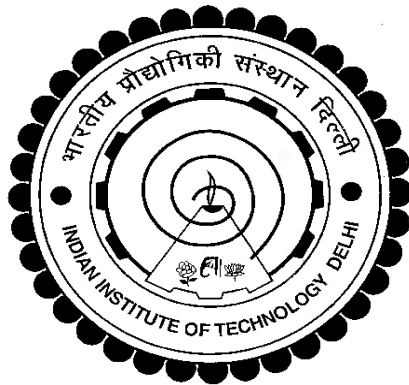


**CHANGING RURAL LABOUR MARKETS IN INDIA:
EVIDENCE FROM SECONDARY DATA AND A VILLAGE IN
KARNATAKA**

SATHEESHA. B



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI**

MAY 2023

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by

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Submitted

in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to the



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI

MAY 2023

DEDICATION

To my son, Gyan

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled “**Changing Rural Labour Markets in India: Evidence from Secondary Data and a Village in Karnataka**”, being submitted by **Mr. Satheesha. B** to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a record of original bona-fide research carried out by him under my supervision. In my opinion, the thesis has reached the standards fulfilling the requirements for submission relating to the degree.

The results contained in the thesis have not been submitted, in part or full, to any other institute or university for award of any degree or diploma.

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Abstract

The diversification of employment structure away from agriculture has been an integral feature of economic development across countries. However, in India, structural transformation of the economy has been much delayed, with agriculture and allied activities continuing to employ 44.2 per cent of the country's workforce in 2017-18. The slow growth of employment opportunities in the non-agricultural sector has been an important factor behind the delayed structural transformation. At the same time, rural labour market changes in India have also been influenced by structural factors, which include agrarian conditions, ownership and distribution of land, historical factors, technology, agro-climatic conditions, cropping pattern, and social structure. Given this background, the main objective of this thesis is to document and understand the changes in rural labour markets in India. Further, it attempts to understand how labour market changes have been associated with the structural and dynamic factors in the economy.

The thesis is partly based on an analysis of data from secondary sources, including the employment and unemployment surveys of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), and data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. The thesis is also based on data obtained from household surveys conducted in Alabujanahalli, a village located in the Mandya district in the southern part of Karnataka. The Foundation for Agrarian Studies (FAS) had conducted a survey in this village in 2008-09, and I have resurveyed the village during 2018-19.

India's labour market has been going through major structural changes in recent years, which include, notably, a faster movement of the rural workforce out of agriculture. The existing studies have revealed various important aspects of this structural transformation. Nevertheless, there is a need for studies that provide deeper insights into how agrarian structure, agricultural productivity and structural transformation are linked with each other in the context of different regions in India.

Given the context above, I specifically addressed three questions in this thesis. They are, first, to document and understand the rural labour market changes in India and across the Indian States. The second question addressed in the thesis was to understand the association between agrarian structure and agricultural growth, on the one hand, and rural labour market changes, on the other. And the third question was to identify the structural and dynamic factors in rural labour market changes in India by analyzing information obtained from a primary survey.

The thesis begins with a detailed discussion of the size and nature of rural labour market changes in India and across Indian States or regions (Chapter 2). The chapter finds that during 2004-05 and 2011-12 period, the shift of the workforce away from agriculture has been faster in rural India. The decline in self-employment in agriculture was mostly among the better-off categories in society, and the decline was largely compensated by an increase in regular jobs in the non-agricultural sector. On the other hand, the workforce belonging to less privileged sections in society moved out of casual labour in agriculture and mostly absorbed in casual labour in the non-agricultural sector, especially in construction. During the second period, from

2011-12 to 2017-18, there has been a shift back of the workforce into agriculture, especially into self-employment belonging to mostly the less privileged categories in society. It appears that the rise in self-employment in agriculture is on account of the non-agricultural casual employment opportunities for the less privileged.

There exists variations in rural labour market changes across Indian States and regions. The States of the western region (Gujarat and Maharashtra) registered a decline in casual labour in agriculture among the less privileged categories during the first period (2004-05 and 2011-12). The decline was largely compensated by a rise in self-employment in agriculture. The levels of agricultural and construction wages in these two States were lower than the Indian averages, notwithstanding the fact that these are two of the richest States in the country. In the central-eastern region of the country, especially in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, the shares of self-employment in agriculture increased during both periods among the less privileged, while casual labour in agriculture registered a decline. The growth of agricultural and rural construction wages was faster than the national average in these States during the second period (2011-12 and 2017-18) but from a lower base.

The second question addressed in the thesis was to understand the association between agrarian structure and agricultural growth and rural labour market changes (Chapter 3). We find that in India, land productivity and labour-land ratio varied across States. In West Bengal, higher land productivity was associated with a higher labour-land ratio. On the other hand, lower land productivity was associated with a lower labour-land ratio in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Karnataka. We identify that agrarian structure, land tenure, agricultural technology, agro-climatic conditions, and cropping pattern are the important factors influencing land productivity, output growth, and labour absorption in agriculture. Moreover, opportunities that emerge in the non-agricultural sector also play an important role in the inter-sectoral movement of workers.

Between 2004-05 and 2011-12, faster agricultural output growth was associated with positive employment growth in agriculture for male workers in Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Haryana. Change in cropping pattern towards a labour-intensive crop of cotton and a rise in tenancy possibly resulted in a rise in labour absorption in cultivation in Gujarat. In Maharashtra, too, the cropping pattern shifted towards labour-intensive crops of cotton and sugarcane. During the second period, that is, 2011-12 to 2017-18, higher output growth was associated with positive employment growth in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. In Madhya Pradesh, expansion of irrigation, institutional factors, an extension of road networks, and a shift in cropping pattern towards high-value crops played a positive role in rising yield and output in agriculture and, in turn, might have resulted in more labour absorption in cultivation.

The third question the thesis addressed was to identify the structural and dynamic factors in rural labour market changes in India by analyzing information obtained from a primary survey of Alabujanahalli (Chapters 5 and 6). An important feature of Alabujanahalli is its proximity to rural towns and the metropolitan city of Bangalore. Despite its proximity to cities, agriculture and allied activities employ a high proportion of the village workforce, 67 per cent in 2018-19.

Important factors which contributed to the higher dependence on agriculture in Alabujanahalli are; the agrarian structure of the village which includes land ownership and its distribution, the land tenure system followed during colonial rule, and better implementation of land reforms. These factors contributed to low levels of landlessness in the village. However, in comparison to the dominant caste (who accounts for more than 75 per cent of the village population), the degree of landlessness is relatively high among SC and other caste groups in the 'backward class'. Moreover, favourable historical conditions and better access to markets contributed to agricultural prosperity and continued dependency on agriculture for livelihood in Alabujanahalli, in particular the Vokkaliga community.

At the same time, a section of the disadvantaged communities in Alabujanahalli continues as agricultural labourers with limited opportunities to diversify. Different forms of control over labour by farmers is the main reason for the low levels of diversification among agricultural labourers. These include attached labour and control over MGNREGA works which might have resulted in low levels of agricultural wages and also prevented the wages from rising in Alabujanahalli.

The resurvey of Alabujanahalli in 2018-19 shows some diversification of employment towards the non-farm sector, especially into regular sector jobs by the young workforce. However, the opportunities in the non-farm sector went in greater numbers to the better-off community of Vokkaliga, and they succeeded in securing better-paying regular jobs in Bangalore. Whereas most of the SC workers were employed in service and sales-related employment and transportation like security guards, drivers, suppliers in bars and sales workers in the textile, particularly in nearby towns. We found that the expansion of education, in particular higher education, and the village's proximity to semi-urban towns and cities with better road and rail networks helped them to access the growing non-farm opportunities outside the village. Moreover, the deepening agrarian crisis and decline in agrarian prosperity in the village might have also resulted in the movement of the young workforce out of agriculture.

Between 2008-09 and 2018-19, inequality in asset ownership across households increased considerably in Alabujanahalli. The Vokkaliga households highly succeeded in raising their ownership of assets in the last decade compared to any other caste groups in the village. This clearly indicates the strong association between economic diversification, caste and class in Alabujanahalli.

सार

रोजगार संरचना के विविधीकरण में कृषि से बढ़ती दूरी विभिन्न देशों में आर्थिक विकास का एक महत्वपूर्ण भाग रही है। हालाँकि, भारत में, अर्थव्यवस्था का संरचनात्मक परिवर्तन बहुत देर से हुआ, और 2017-18 तक कृषि और सम्बंधित गतिविधियों में देश के कार्यबल का 44.2 प्रतिशत भागीदार है। गैर-कृषि क्षेत्र में रोजगार के अवसरों की धीमी वृद्धि संरचनात्मक परिवर्तन में देरी का एक महत्वपूर्ण कारक रही है। इसी समय, भारत में ग्रामीण श्रम बाजार में परिवर्तन भी संरचनात्मक कारकों से प्रभावित हुए हैं, जिनमें कृषि की स्थिति, भूमि का स्वामित्व और वितरण, ऐतिहासिक कारक, प्रौद्योगिकी, कृषि-जलवायु स्थितियाँ, फसल पैटर्न और सामाजिक संरचना शामिल हैं। इस पृष्ठभूमि को देखते हुए, इस थीसिस का मुख्य उद्देश्य भारत में ग्रामीण श्रम बाजारों में परिवर्तनों का आलेख करना और समझना है। इसके अलावा, यह समझने का प्रयास करता है कि अर्थव्यवस्था में संरचनात्मक और गतिशील कारकों के साथ श्रम बाजार में परिवर्तन कैसे जुड़ा हुआ है।

थीसिस आंशिक रूप से माध्यमिक स्रोतों से डेटा के विश्लेषण पर आधारित है, जिसमें राष्ट्रीय नमूना सर्वेक्षण कार्यालय (NSSO) के रोजगार और बेरोजगारी सर्वेक्षण, आवधिक श्रम बल सर्वेक्षण (PLFS), और कृषि और किसान कल्याण मंत्रालय के डेटा शामिल हैं। इसके अलावा, थीसिस कर्नाटक के दक्षिणी भाग में मांड्या जिले में स्थित एक गांव अलबुजनहल्ली में किए गए घरेलू सर्वेक्षणों से प्राप्त आंकड़ों पर भी आधारित है। फाउंडेशन फॉर एगोरियन स्टडीज (एफएएस) ने 2008-09 में इस गांव में एक सर्वेक्षण किया था, और मैसे 2018-19 के दौरान गांव का फिर से सर्वेक्षण किया है।

भारत का श्रम बाजार हाल के वर्षों में प्रमुख संरचनात्मक परिवर्तनों से गुजर रहा है, जिसमें विशेष रूप से कृषि से ग्रामीण कार्यबल का तेजी से पलायन शामिल है। मौजूदा अध्ययनों से इस संरचनात्मक परिवर्तन के विभिन्न महत्वपूर्ण पहलुओं का पता चला है। फिर भी, ऐसे अध्ययनों की आवश्यकता है जो भारत में विभिन्न क्षेत्रों के संदर्भ में कृषि संरचना, कृषि उत्पादकता और संरचनात्मक परिवर्तन के सम्बंध के बारे में गहरी अंतर्दृष्टि प्रदान करते हैं।

उपरोक्त संदर्भ को देखते हुए, मैसे इस थीसिस में तीन प्रश्नों को विशेष रूप से संबोधित किया है। पहला प्रश्न पूरे भारत और भारतीय राज्यों में ग्रामीण श्रम बाजार में बदलाव को समझने का प्रयास करता है। थीसिस में संबोधित दूसरा प्रश्न एक ओर कृषि संरचना और कृषि विकास के बीच संबंध को समझने का, और दूसरी ओर ग्रामीण श्रम बाजार में परिवर्तन को समझने का प्रयास करता है। और तीसरा प्रश्न प्राथमिक सर्वेक्षण से प्राप्त जानकारी का विश्लेषण करके भारत में ग्रामीण श्रम बाजार में परिवर्तन के संरचनात्मक और गतिशील कारकों की पहचान करता है।

थीसिस भारत और भारतीय राज्यों और क्षेत्रों (अध्याय 2) में ग्रामीण श्रम बाजार में परिवर्तन के आकार और प्रकृति की विस्तृत चर्चा के साथ शुरू होती है। अध्याय में पाया गया है कि 2004-05 और 2011-12 की अवधि के दौरान, ग्रामीण भारत में कार्यबल का कृषि से दूर का तेजी से स्थानांतरण हुआ है। कृषि में स्व-रोजगार में गिरावट ज्यादातर समाज की आर्थिक और सामाजिक रूप से बेहतर श्रेणियों में से थी, और गैर-कृषि क्षेत्र में नियमित नौकरियों में वृद्धि से इस गिरावट की भरपाई काफ़ी हद तक हो गई थी। दूसरी ओर, समाज में कम विशेषाधिकार प्राप्त वर्गों से आने वाला कार्यबल कृषि में अनौपचारिक

श्रम से बाहर चला गया और ज्यादातर गैर-कृषि क्षेत्र में, विशेष रूप से निर्माण में, अनौपचारिक श्रम में लग गए। 2011-12 से 2017-18 के बीच में, कार्यबल का कृषि में वापस बदलाव हुआ है, विशेष रूप से समाज में कम विशेषाधिकार प्राप्त श्रेणियों के स्वरोजगार में। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि कृषि में स्व-रोजगार में वृद्धि कम विशेषाधिकार प्राप्त लोगों के लिए गैर-कृषि अनौपचारिक रोजगार के अवसरों के कारण है।

भारतीय राज्यों और क्षेत्रों के ग्रामीण श्रम बाजारों कि बीच कुछ विविधता ज़रूर हैं। पश्चिमी क्षेत्र के राज्यों (गुजरात और महाराष्ट्र) ने पहली अवधि (2004-05 और 2011-12) के दौरान कम विशेषाधिकार प्राप्त श्रेणियों के बीच कृषि में अनौपचारिक श्रम में गिरावट दर्ज की। गिरावट की काफी हद तक भरपाई कृषि में स्वरोजगार में वृद्धि से हुई। इन दो राज्यों में कृषि और निर्माण मजदूरी का स्तर भारतीय औसत से कम था, इस तथ्य के बावजूद कि ये देश के दो सबसे अमीर राज्य हैं। देश के मध्य-पूर्वी क्षेत्र में, विशेष रूप से छत्तीसगढ़ और मध्य प्रदेश में, कृषि में स्वरोजगार के हिस्से में दोनों अवधि के दौरान कम विशेषाधिकार प्राप्त लोगों के बीच वृद्धि हुई, जबकि कृषि में अनौपचारिक श्रम में गिरावट दर्ज की गई। दूसरी अवधि (2011-12 और 2017-18) के दौरान इन राज्यों में कृषि और ग्रामीण निर्माण मजदूरी की वृद्धि राष्ट्रीय औसत से तेज थी, लेकिन निचले आधार से।

थीसिस में संबोधित दूसरा प्रश्न कृषि संरचना और कृषि विकास और ग्रामीण श्रम बाजार में परिवर्तन (अध्याय 3) के बीच संबंध को समझता है। हम पाते हैं कि भारत में, भूमि उत्पादकता और श्रमिक-भूमि अनुपात राज्यों में भिन्न है। पश्चिम बंगाल में, उच्च भूमि उत्पादकता उच्च श्रमिक-भूमि अनुपात से जुड़ी थी। दूसरी ओर, निम्न भूमि उत्पादकता मध्य प्रदेश, छत्तीसगढ़, महाराष्ट्र, राजस्थान और कर्नाटक में निम्न श्रमिक-भूमि अनुपात से जुड़ी थी। हम पहचानते हैं कि कृषि संरचना, भूमि कार्यकाल, कृषि प्रौद्योगिकी, कृषि-जलवायु स्थितियां और फसल पैटर्न भूमि उत्पादकता, उत्पादन वृद्धि और कृषि में श्रम अवशोषण को प्रभावित करने वाले महत्वपूर्ण कारक हैं। इसके अलावा, गैर-कृषि क्षेत्र में उभरने वाले अवसर भी श्रमिकों के अंतर-क्षेत्रीय गमनागमन में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं।

2004-05 और 2011-12 के बीच, छत्तीसगढ़, गुजरात, महाराष्ट्र और हरियाणा में पुरुष श्रमिकों के लिए कृषि में सकारात्मक रोजगार वृद्धि बढ़ते कृषि उत्पादन से जुड़ी थी। कपास, जो कि एक श्रम प्रधान फसल है, की ओर फसल पैटर्न में बदलाव, और काश्तकारी में वृद्धि के परिणामस्वरूप संभवतः गुजरात में खेती में श्रम अवशोषण में वृद्धि हुई। महाराष्ट्र में भी, फसल पैटर्न कपास और गन्ने की श्रम प्रधान फसलों की ओर स्थानांतरित हो गया। दूसरी अवधि के दौरान, यानी 2011-12 से 2017-18 तक, उच्च उत्पादन वृद्धि मध्य प्रदेश और राजस्थान में सकारात्मक रोजगार वृद्धि से जुड़ी थी। मध्य प्रदेश में, सिंचाई का विस्तार, संस्थागत कारक, सड़क नेटवर्क का विस्तार, और उच्च मूल्य वाली फसलों की ओर फसल के पैटर्न में बदलाव ने कृषि में बढ़ती उपज और उत्पादन में सकारात्मक भूमिका निभाई, और साथ ही यह खेती में अधिक श्रम के अवशोषण अधिक श्रम का कारक भी हो सकता है।

थीसिस से संबोधित किया गया तीसरा प्रश्न अलबुजनाहल्ली (अध्याय 5 और 6) में किए गए एक प्राथमिक सर्वेक्षण से प्राप्त जानकारी का विश्लेषण करके भारत में ग्रामीण श्रम बाजार में संरचनात्मक और गतिशील कारकों की पहचान करता है। अलबुजनाहल्ली की एक महत्वपूर्ण विशेषता ग्रामीण कस्बों

और बेंगलोर के महानगरीय शहर से इसकी निकटता है। शहरों से इसकी निकटता के बावजूद, कृषि और संबद्ध गतिविधियों में 2018-19 में 67 प्रतिशत ग्रामीण कार्यबल का उच्च अनुपात कार्यरत है। अलबुजनाहल्ली में कृषि पर उच्च निर्भरता में योगदान देने वाले महत्वपूर्ण कारक हैं; गाँव की कृषि संरचना जिसमें भूमि का स्वामित्व और उसका वितरण शामिल है, औपनिवेशिक शासन के दौरान अपनाई जाने वाली भूमि काश्तकारी प्रणाली, और भूमि सुधारों का बेहतर कार्यान्वयन। इन कारकों ने गाँव में भूमिहीनता के निम्न स्तर में योगदान दिया। हालांकि, प्रमुख जाति (जो गाँव की आबादी का 75 प्रतिशत से अधिक है) की तुलना में, अनुसूचित जाति और पिछड़े वर्ग में अन्य जाति समूहों के बीच भूमिहीनता का स्तर अपेक्षाकृत अधिक है। इसके अलावा, अनुकूल ऐतिहासिक परिस्थितियों और बाजारों तक बेहतर पहुंच ने कृषि समृद्धि में योगदान दिया और अलबुजनाहल्ली में, विशेष रूप से वोक्कालिगा समुदाय में, आजीविका के लिए कृषि पर निरंतर निर्भरता बनी रही।

साथ ही, अलबुजनाहल्ली में वंचित समुदायों का एक वर्ग विविधीकरण के सीमित अवसरों के साथ खेतिहर मजदूरों के रूप में जारी है। किसानों द्वारा श्रम पर विभिन्न प्रकार के नियंत्रण कृषि श्रमिकों के बीच विविधीकरण के निम्न स्तर का मुख्य कारण है। इनमें संलग्न श्रम और मनरेगा कार्यों पर नियंत्रण शामिल है, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप कृषि मजदूरी की दर कम हो सकती है और इसके कारण अलबुजनाहल्ली में दर में बढ़त भी रुक सकती है।

2018-19 में अलबुजनाहल्ली का पुनर्सर्वेक्षण गैर-कृषि क्षेत्र की ओर रोजगार के कुछ विविधीकरण को दर्शाता है, विशेष रूप से युवा कार्यबल द्वारा नियमित क्षेत्र की नौकरियों में। हालांकि, गैर-कृषि क्षेत्र में अवसर वोक्कालिगा के समृद्ध समुदाय के लिए बड़ी संख्या में आए, और वे बेंगलोर में बेहतर वेतन वाली नियमित नौकरियां हासिल करने में सफल रहे। जबकि अधिकांश अनुसूचित जाति के कार्यकर्ता सेवा और बिक्री से संबंधित रोजगार और परिवहन में कार्यरत थे जैसे सुरक्षा गार्ड, ड्राइवर, बार में आपूर्तिकर्ता और कपड़ा में बिक्री कार्यकर्ता, विशेष रूप से आसपास के शहरों में। हमने पाया कि शिक्षा के विस्तार, विशेष रूप से उच्च शिक्षा, और बेहतर सड़क और रेल नेटवर्क के साथ अर्ध-शहरी कस्बों और शहरों से गाँव की निकटता ने उन्हें गाँव के बाहर बढ़ते गैर-कृषि अवसरों तक पहुँचने में मदद की। इसके अलावा, गहराते कृषि संकट और गाँव में कृषि समृद्धि में गिरावट के परिणामस्वरूप युवा कार्यबल का कृषि से बाहर जाना भी हो सकता है।

2008-09 और 2018-19 के बीच, अलबुजनाहल्ली में घरों में संपत्ति के स्वामित्व में असमानता काफी बढ़ गई। गाँव में किसी भी अन्य जाति समूहों की तुलना में वोक्कालिगा परिवार पिछले दशक में अपनी संपत्ति के स्वामित्व को बढ़ाने में अत्यधिक सफल रहे हैं। यह अलबुजनाहल्ली में आर्थिक विविधीकरण, जाति और वर्ग के बीच मजबूत जुड़ाव को स्पष्ट रूप से इंगित करता है।

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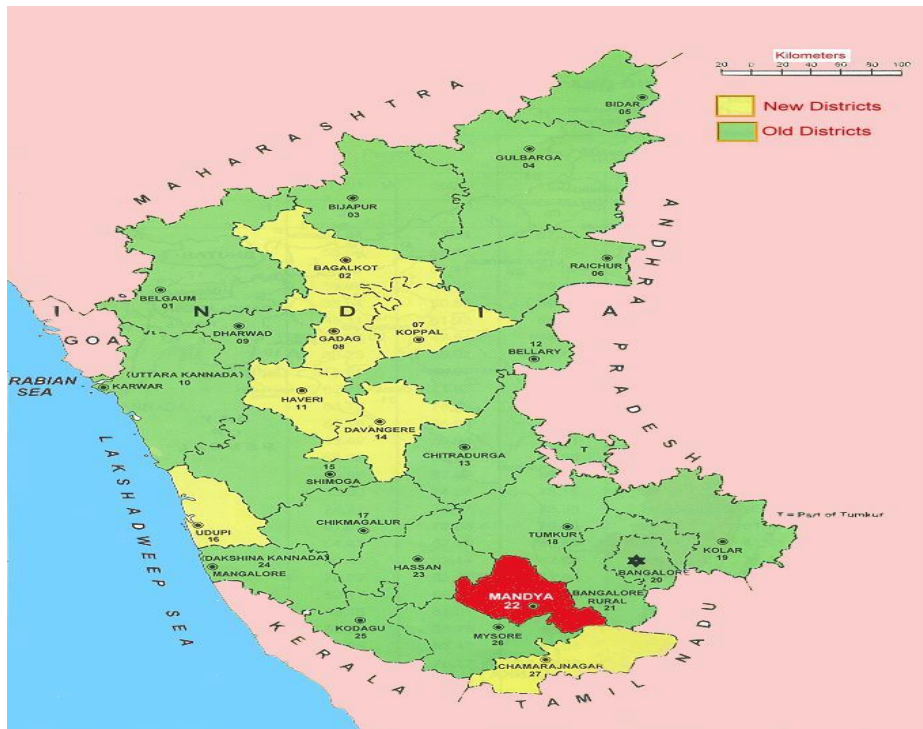
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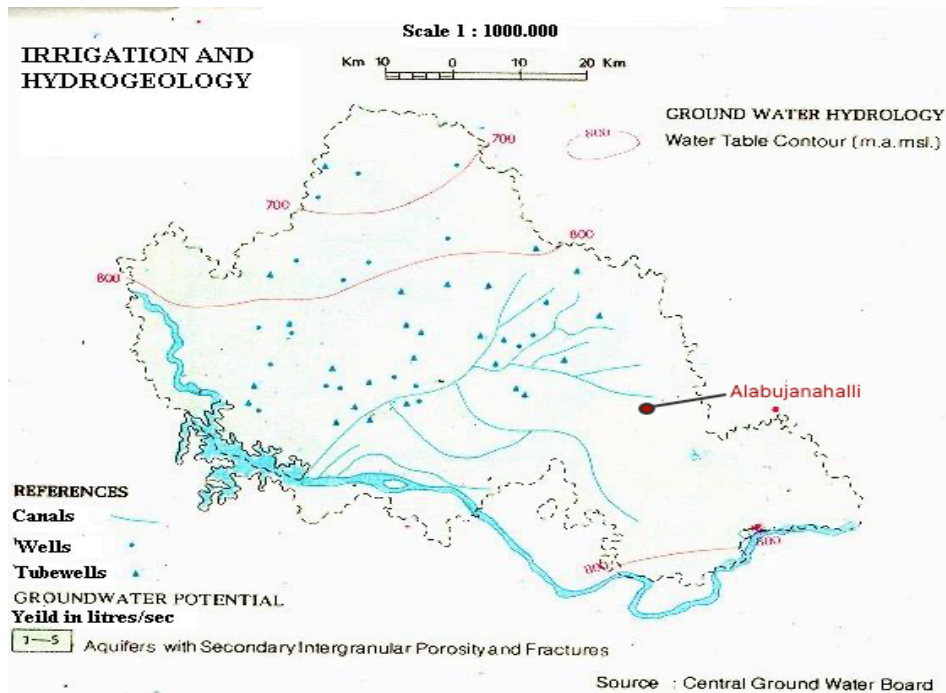
Source: (Accessed on July 21, 2021, <http://164.100.238.10/maps.asp>)

Map 2: Mandya District



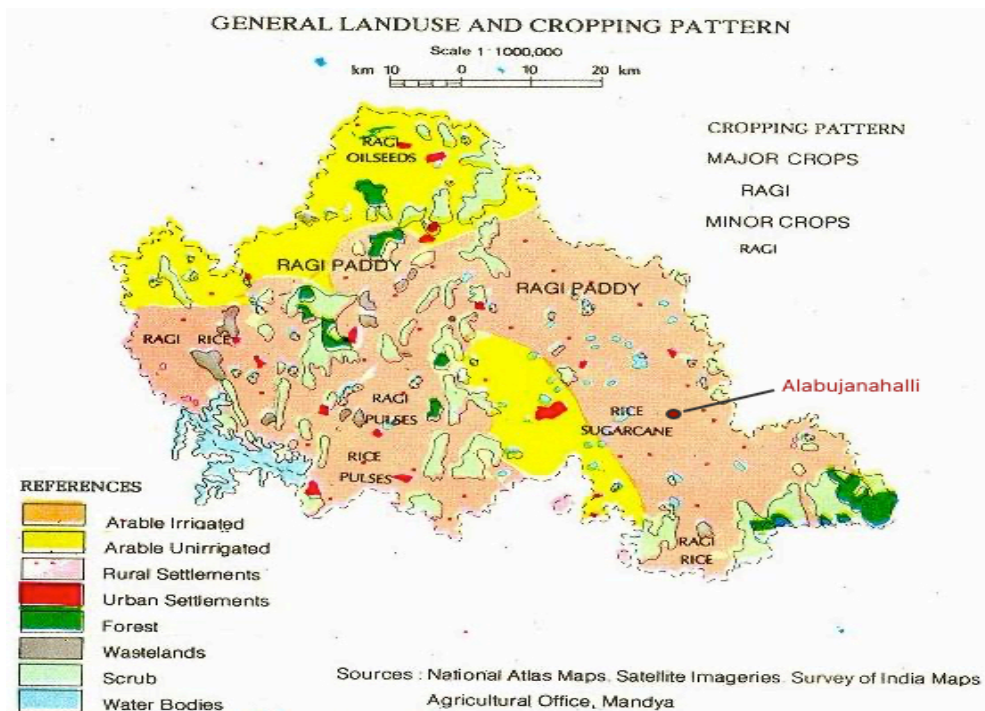
Source: (Accessed on July 21, 2021, www.mapsofindia.com).

Map 3: Irrigation and Hydrogeology in Mandya District



Source: (Accessed on July 21, 2021, <http://164.100.238.10/maps.asp>)

Map 4: Land Use and Cropping Pattern in Mandya District



Source: (Accessed on July 21, 2021, <http://164.100.238.10/maps.asp>)