Report of the Official Group of
Government of Karnataka

Improving the
Economic Condition of Farmers

2007
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Improving the Economic Condition of Farmers


Introduction:

Several cases of farmers committing suicide have been reported in different parts of Karnataka over the last 10 years. According to the Department of Agriculture, 1605 cases of farmers’ suicide were reported in the period 2004-07 (upto August 2007). As early as in 1998, Karnataka Legislature appointed a 15 member Joint Committee of Legislature to study the causes for the cases of farmers’ suicides in different parts of the State, particularly in Gulbarga and Bidar districts. Another Committee of experts appointed by Government investigated into the causes of suicides among farmers in 2002-03. The Government initiated several measures to alleviate the distress among farmers in the state in the aftermath of the reports submitted by these Committees. Since 2003-04 the State government has also been paying an exgratia amount of Rupees one lakh to families of farmers in respect of confirmed cases of suicide due to distress.

Taking into account the widespread distress among farmers in several States including Karnataka, the Prime Minister of India announced in July 2006 a special package of assistance to farmers in distress (commonly called the Vidarbha Package). This package was extended to six districts of Karnataka i.e, Belgaum, Shimoga, Chickmagalur, Chitradurga, Hassan and Kodagu which had reported a large number of suicides among farmers. The package included measures like rescheduling of agricultural loans with provision of interest subsidy, and grants to increase public
investments in agriculture and allied sectors. Subsequently, in March 2007, the Government of Karnataka also announced a major policy of waiver of agricultural loans amounting to over Rs.2000 crores to provide relief to farmers in the state.

Cases of farmers committing suicide have continued in the year 2007. In the above context, the Department of Agriculture arranged a convention of farmers’ representatives from all districts of the State on 14th June 2007 for a direct dialogue with the Chief Minister to discuss the problems being faced by the farmers. A summary of the problems represented and suggestions made by the farmers from various districts is placed in Annexure – ‘A’.

**Farmers’ Distress: Some Causes**

In the day long dialogue that the farmers’ representatives had with the Government of Karnataka in June 2007 several causes were indicated for the distress leading to suicides by farmers. It was noted that there were more suicides by farmers cultivating crops with a high level of cost of cultivation like cotton, tur dal, onions, potato etc., as compared to those who cultivated crops with low costs of production. Farmers in such cases had to borrow heavily for purchase of high cost inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. In many cases these loans were obtained from informal money lenders or traders at high rates of interest. Failure of crops due to adverse seasonal conditions or uncontrolled pest attacks resulted in the inability of farmers to discharge the loans obtained by them. Also, even when the production was good, a slump in the prices resulted in huge losses for the farmers, leading to default on the loans obtained. Failure of bore wells installed with heavy investment also resulted in farmers defaulting on loans. In some cases the farmers were unable to discharge their liabilities due to unforeseen factors like
accidents, illness of a member of the family leading to heavy medical expenses, expenditure on social obligations etc. In many cases the creditors used strong coercive methods for recovering the loans. Further, indebted farmers often went into depression caused by loss of face in the village community. These factors were generally considered as responsible for the farmers taking the extreme step of committing suicide.

Subsequent to the above dialogue, the Government constituted an Official Group to suggest policy measures which could be adopted to alleviate the distress of farmers and to improve their economic condition. *It was believed that improving their economic condition was essential to enable the farmers to cope with the challenges of agriculture in a market oriented economy which is undergoing several changes in the wake of the process of globalization.* This was also necessary to protect the livelihoods of the farming community which forms the majority of the State’s population. The composition of the Official Group appointed by Government is shown at Annexure-‘B’. The Official Group had several meetings in June – August 2007 in which discussions were held with representatives of various departments of government including Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Cooperation, Sericulture, Agricultural Marketing, etc., to identify policy measures which would have the maximum impact on ameliorating the condition of the farmers and strengthening their economic condition. Discussions were also held with Scientists from the Universities of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore and Dharwad, the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Sciences University (KVAFSU), Bidar, and the Central Sericulture Research Institute, Mysore etc., to identify the technologies that could be adopted profitably by the farmers of Karnataka. The Official Group held
useful discussions with agri-business companies and exporters with a view to understanding the marketing strategies appropriate for the farmers of the State. Further, discussions were also held by the Group with a few progressive farmers and NGOs from different parts of the State as also representatives of NABARD and other Banks, active in agricultural finance.

The recommendations contained in the report of the Group are aimed mainly at identifying strategies for improving the productivity of Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Animal Husbandry etc., with a view to maximizing the incomes of farmers' households and minimising the risks faced by them in the context of Karnataka’s agricultural situation. While the various aspects of Karnataka’s New Agricultural Policy-2006 have been kept in view, the report seeks to identify only a few measures of strategic importance that are likely to have an immediate and widespread impact on the economic condition of the farmers in Karnataka.

**Agricultural Situation in Karnataka - Main Features:**

The Group has noted that the agricultural situation in Karnataka is characterised by the following features:

1. The agro climatic conditions of Karnataka have a great deal of variety which enables crops of great diversity to be produced in different parts of the State.

2. Over 70% of the cultivated land (net sown area 124 lakh hectares) is unirrigated and depends upon uncertain monsoons.

3. Apart from major projects providing canal irrigation, the irrigation facilities of the State consist of over 36,000
community tanks and over ten lakh irrigation wells which together account for about 58 percent of the net irrigated area of about 30 lakh hectares.

4. More than 73% of the farmers fall into the category of small and marginal farmers with an average holding of less than one hectare of land.

5. The productivity of most agricultural crops (with the exception of maize, sugarcane and rice) is significantly below the national average and has potential for further improvement.

6. In spite of favourable conditions for horticultural crops, cereal crops dominate the state’s agriculture with more than 54% of the gross cultivated area under cereals. Horticulture crops cover only about 12% (16.30 lakh hectares) of net cropped area.

7. Livestock production and dairy farming constitute about 26 per cent of the State’s ASDP (State Domestic Product from Agriculture).

8. The growth of the Sericulture sector, which employs over one million persons has remained stagnant for several years inspite of its potential for expansion.

9. The agricultural marketing sector has not developed adequately to ensure stable and remunerative prices for agricultural produce.

10. The Agriculture sector (including Horticulture, Sericulture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, etc.) accounted for less than 20 percent of the State’s Domestic Product estimated at Rs.1,94,009 crores in 2006-07. The sector’s annual
growth rate has been only about 0.61% during the decade from 1993-94 to 2003-04. During the 10th Plan period, the growth of the primary sector in the State has actually been negative (-1.55% per annum) according to the Planning Department.

A review of the agricultural situation in the State and the programmes being implemented in this sector was undertaken by the Prime Minister of India and the Union Minister for Agriculture along with the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister on 3rd August 2007. In the above meeting the need for launching a major initiative for improving the productivity of the Agriculture sector in the State was emphasized along with an assurance of Central assistance for the purpose. Further, Government of India have introduced a new programme for improving the performance of the Agriculture sector in the country through the National Agricultural Development Programme (NADP). It is expected that additional Central assistance to the tune of over Rs.25,000 crores will be made available to States during the 11th Five Year Plan for augmenting investment in agriculture. This programme along with other national programmes like the National Food Security Mission should enable the State to launch a number of initiatives to increase the productivity of agriculture and allied activities and to create the required processing and marketing infrastructure. This in turn will go a long way in increasing and stabilizing the incomes of agricultural households in Karnataka. Keeping the above context in view the Official Group would like to recommend a set of policy initiatives for the consideration of the Government of Karnataka. The recommendations of the Official Group are grouped under the following headings:

1. Creating Multiple Sources of Farm Income
2. ‘Raitha Shakthi’ - Empowering Small Farmers Through Group Approach
3. Measures to Restore Soil Health and Fertility
4. Watershed Development and Moisture Conservation
5. Optimising the Benefits of Irrigation
6. Seeds of quality, Seeds of Prosperity - Improving Seed Replacement Rate
8. Development of Dairy Farming
9. Developing Poultry Industry
10. Livestock Farming for Meat Production
11. Overcoming Stagnation in Sericulture
12. Universalising Access to Agricultural Credit
13. Augmenting Infrastructure for Processing and Storage
14. Agricultural Marketing and Exports
15. Agricultural Research, Education and Extension
16. Application of Information Technology in Agriculture
17. Farmers’ Welfare: Special Attention Needed
18. Upliftment of Agricultural Labourers
19. Promoting Non-Agricultural Activities in Rural Areas

1. Creating Multiple Sources of Farm Income

The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister has in its report of July 2007 pointed out that farm income in India today is about 67% from crop production and only about 33% from livestock, Fisheries and Forestry. On the other hand, in China only 50% of farm income is derived from crop production with about 34% coming from Animal Husbandry and about 16% from forestry, fisheries and other sectors. The Council therefore advocate diversification as a key strategy in improving the economic condition of farmers.
As already pointed out, a majority of Karnataka’s farmers, particularly in the dry regions, depend on the cultivation of field crops for their livelihood. In the years of poor rainfall or other natural calamities they are highly vulnerable to distress caused by loss of income and livelihood. It is therefore necessary that each farmer’s household is enabled to develop multiple sources of income, at least a minimum of two sources. This can be achieved by promoting diversification of farming activity in several ways including the following:

- Cultivation of perennial horticulture crops like mango, sapota, guava, amla, coconut, etc., along with field crops like ragi, jowar, pulses, and oil seeds is a good strategy for diversification at the farm level. In many parts of Karnataka it is possible to grow horticultural crops even in dry lands along with cereals and pulses as is being done in districts like Kolar, Tumkur, Bangalore, etc. These crops enable the farmers to realise substantial income even in the years when the field crops fail due to poor seasonal conditions. To facilitate adoption of such perennial horticultural crops, farmers need to be assisted with quality planting material, technical know how and credit to enable them to plant such tree crops in their dry lands. In implementing this strategy, the State should take advantage of the funds available under the National Horticultural Mission and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme for the purpose. This would be an effective way of drought proofing the vast areas of dry land in Karnataka.

- Livestock farming including rearing of dairy animals, poultry units, sheep, goats, pigs, etc., can be taken up as a source of supplementary income by virtually all farmers and
particularly the small and marginal farmers. For this purpose it is necessary to mobilize the supply of institutional credit for enabling the farmers to invest in the creation of capital assets and purchase of animals. Such supplementary activities should be supported in every village for an adequate number of farmers so that technical inputs like veterinary services and marketing facilities become viable at the village level. This strategy is further elaborated in sections of this report dealing with dairy farming, poultry farming and livestock farming for meat production.

- Sericulture and Apiculture can be developed in combination with field crops in most parts of Karnataka. While Sericulture can be sustained with only a small part of an agricultural holding being used for the purpose, Apiculture does not require any additional land. Both of them can provide supplementary income while Sericulture can even be a main source of income and employment.

- Cultivation of conventional flower crops (Jasmine, Chrysanthemum, Marigold, etc.,) along with field crops is feasible in areas having higher rainfall or with availability of some irrigation. These crops grown even in very small plots forming part of an agricultural holding can provide sustained year round cash income and gainful employment to farmers. These crops are particularly profitable in areas close to urban centres.

- In some parts of the State, like the Malnad areas receiving highest rainfall and in the command areas of irrigation projects, farmers can also take up pisciculture in ponds to supplement agricultural income. Over 2500 minor irrigation tanks in the State also offer good scope for inland fisheries
which can be taken up by groups of farmers. The National Fisheries Development Board of Government of India has special schemes for promotion of inland fisheries including pond fish production and reservoir fisheries. The Department of Fisheries can help farmers avail of the benefits of these schemes.

- Social forestry programmes in Karnataka have mainly focused on raising plantations in degraded forest areas and common lands in village limits. As yet adequate attention is not paid to getting farmers to adopt forestry as a substitute for other crops or as a supplementary crop on marginal lands within their holdings. The approach of the Forest Department needs also to focus on promoting commercial forestry through demonstrations on farmers’ lands by growing appropriate species for augmenting farmers’ incomes. They can also promote intensive bundside plantations over large areas by planting species like casuarina, silver oak, teak, etc., which can fetch substantial supplementary income to farmers.

The above points only illustrate the possibilities for creating multiple sources of income for farmers and several other avenues can also be explored in this direction. The Group feels that the state government must adopt the strategy of diversification of agriculture as a major element of its policy. The motto of diversification shall be ‘no field with one crop, and no farmer with one income’.

2. ‘Raitha Shakthi’ - Empowering Small Farmers Through Group Approach

The viability of small and marginal agricultural holdings has always been a major issue in Karnataka’s Agriculture. Recent surveys show that the average size of agricultural holdings in the
state is actually getting smaller over the years. While the State had 35.51 lakh holdings in 1970-71 with an average area of 3.20 hectares, the number of holdings had increased to 75.81 lakh by 2005-06 and the average size of the holdings had decreased to a mere 1.63 hectares. About 48 percent of the holdings in 2005-06 were in the class of marginal holdings of less than one hectare, with an average size of only 0.45 hectare. This shows that the constraints imposed by the small size of agricultural holdings is a challenge which needs to be overcome by appropriate policy initiatives. Experts in the field have time and again suggested group farming approach (cluster farming, or farmers’ consortia, etc..,) to overcome the constraint of the small size of agricultural holdings. The Official Group is of the view that the state must reorient its agricultural extension strategy to promote a ‘group farming approach’ at the village level to overcome this problem.

In the context of Karnataka’s agriculture this approach can be operationalised in the following manner:

- In each village groups of farmers numbering between 10-50 willing to take-up cultivation of similar crops (or activities like poultry farming, goat rearing etc..,) should be formed and trained to act as a group in accessing credit, technology, inputs and marketing services. Individuals in the group may adopt the group approach for one or two common crops grown by them even if each of them cultivates several crops. Thus there could be groups of groundnut farmers, mango farmers, vegetable growers, floriculturists, poultry farmers etc., depending upon which activities in a village can benefit the farmers most by adopting the group approach.

- Each group should be attached to a credit institution like a bank branch or a cooperative society which will assess and
meet the total credit needs of the group depending upon the common crops or activities of the group. The group can also access insurance services for their common crops to protect them against risks of crop failure.

- The group approach will enable farmers to access professional / technical services of consultants as it will be viable for them to pay for such services collectively. Extension services of the Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Sericulture, etc. can be provided more easily to groups with common crops or activities instead of addressing individual farmers separately. Also groups of farmers to purchase or hire agricultural machinery and equipment required for their common crops.

- Each farmers’ group can have a tie-up with a marketing firm through contract farming. They can also market their produce on their own by accessing transport, storage, and packaging services collectively.

- Farmers’ groups will be able to designate selected members among them to perform tasks like book keeping, and negotiation of contracts depending upon their literacy and business skills. This will minimise the exploitative role played by several middlemen in the supply of credit and inputs and marketing of produce.

- While acting in a group, farmers are better equipped to face various risks and this will greatly help in reducing distress on the part of farmers. Groups can also mobilise individual farmers for various socially beneficial activities like shramadan, cultural programmes, village festivals etc. which
would increase a sense of ‘self worth’ among members making them less prone to depressions.

The State Government has organized during the last five years successfully over 1.20 lakh women’s groups (*Stree Shakthi Groups*) in the rural areas. With encouragement and support from the NABARD many financial institutions are organizing Self Help Groups of Women and BPL households to help them avail of micro finance facilities. This has contributed greatly to the empowerment of women in the rural areas. The Official Group feels that the government must adopt a similar policy of promoting farmers’ groups on a large scale in all the villages of enable small and marginal farmers to secure the benefits of medium and large scale farming. To achieve the above objective the government may utilize the services of active Non-Governmental Organisations working in the rural areas. Also, the Government will have to provide suitable incentives for the formation and the operation of farmers’ groups. Each farmers’ group may be given an initial working capital of about Rs.10,000/- as in the case of *Stree Shakti* groups. The Extension staff of various departments can interact with the groups to provide training facilities, working capital, subsidies and other supporting services. This strategy can be implemented initially in 1200 Suvarna Gramodaya Villages where community mobilization is being attempted through the services of Non Governmental Organisations. The Official Group is of the view that this approach is likely to revolutionize agriculture in Karnataka by empowering farmers to access credit, technology and inputs on more favourable terms and to act strongly in marketing their produce for obtaining more remunerative prices.
3. **Measures to Restore Soil Health and Fertility**

According to Agricultural Scientists, restoration of soil health and fertility is one of the prime needs of Karnataka’s agriculture. States like Gujarat have launched major initiatives to improve the productivity of agriculture by taking up soil testing for each holding and by issuing Soil Health Cards on a campaign mode. The Agricultural Policy of Karnataka – 2006 envisages the issuing of Agricultural Passbooks (*Raita Mitra Pustaka*) to each of the 75 lakh farmers in the State. These passbooks can have details of the results of soil tests and the remedial measures required for restoring soil fertility. The Official Group suggests the following measures to implement the above policy:

- Farmers should be encouraged to get soil samples of their holdings tested once in three years and this should be made a condition for sanction of agricultural loans or supply of subsidized inputs. Subsidy towards the cost of soil testing can be given while disbursing crop loans or distributing inputs.

- Soil testing for individual holdings can focus on the major plant nutrients of NPK, through simple testing procedures. Recommendations regarding micronutrients in the soil need to be made on the basis of more elaborate analyses which can be made for tracts of different soil types in a village or a group of villages.

- Soil testing laboratories may be set up and operated through private entrepreneurs in each hobli / cluster of villages to provide subsidized soil testing services to farmers. Such private laboratories may be given a minimum quantum of
guaranteed business by the Department of Agriculture to make private investment viable.

- State Agricultural Universities can train private entrepreneurs to setup soil testing laboratories. Private sector soil testing laboratories should be given financial incentives like capital subsidy, maintenance charges, etc., to make their operations viable. Fertiliser manufacturers and financial institutions can be motivated to provide capital grants / loans to private entrepreneurs for setting up soil testing laboratories. It is estimated that a subsidy of about Rs.50 crores is needed to implement this scheme in the State with about 1000 laboratories.

- Cultivation of green manure crops should be promoted extensively by making available inputs like seeds, and technical know how. Farmers also need to be trained in the production of bio fertilizers like blue-green algae, azolla, rhizobiam etc.,

- A new movement for use of organic wastes for enrichment of soils and conservation of soil fertility is of late catching the imagination of farmers in Karnataka. The use of Jeevamrutham, Beejamrutham, Panchagavya, bio-pesticides and repellants etc. is gaining popularity among farmers who have realised the limitations of using chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Some aspects of this ‘natural farming’ approach is also validated by research institutions. The Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Universities must take up systematic research to validate this new approach and develop package of practices appropriate for specific crops.
• Extensive campaigns should be organized by the Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, and Agriculture Sciences with the involvement of Panchayats and NGOs for motivating farmers to restore soil fertility by addition of green manure, and through other corrective measures. The Gujarat model of Krishi Mahotsavas could be emulated by organizing *Bhoomi Habba* campaigns for about four weeks to cover every village before the sowing season every year.

• Every farmer’s household should be encouraged to take-up production of vermicompost in their backyard in place of the manure pits commonly seen in the villages. If taken up intensively on a campaign mode this will greatly facilitate village sanitation also. The funds available under the Total Sanitation Campaign of Government of India and Suvarna Gramodaya of State Government can be utilized effectively for this purpose. The expertise of several NGOs like the Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF) can be made use of for these campaigns which can be initially mounted in 1200 Suvarana Gramodaya Villages.

4. **Watershed Development and Moisture Conservation**

   Integrated Watershed Development Programmes undertaken by the government have demonstrated the efficacy of this approach to soil and moisture conservation which can increase agricultural productivity upto 50 percent. Out of the total area of about 130 lakh hectares available for watershed development, about 33 percent, or 43 lakh hectares has so far been treated under various programmes. It will be several years before the State is able to cover the entire dry land area under these programmes at the current rate of about six lakh hectares per
year. Therefore, the State must step up its investments for Watershed Development giving due priority in project implementation to the drought prone districts. The Official Group’s recommendations in this regard are as follows:

- Watershed Development on the State’s ‘Sujala’ Project model should be completed in all the drought prone districts within a time frame of 10 years. For this purpose the programme should be taken up in 10% of the villages in such districts every year. A beginning can be made in this respect by taking up this programme in the 1200 Suvarna Gramodaya villages immediately.

- Funds available under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme should be used of for watershed development to supplement the funds available for the programme. While 11 out of 29 districts in the State are currently implementing NREGA, the programme is likely to be extended to all the remaining districts within a year. As the programme permits land development in the holdings of small and marginal farmers, about 75% of the farmers’ can be covered under this programme. This will generate employment for agricultural labourers on a large scale besides improving the productivity of small holdings.

- Water and soil conservation measures like construction of farm ponds, formation of check dams, contour bunds, nala bunds, percolation tanks etc., and moisture conserving cultivation practices should be universally adopted by farmers in the dry land zones. The funds available under Suvarna Krishi Honda and the National Horticulture Mission should be made use of for sinking farm ponds. Farmers of each village
should be trained in groups in the adoption of these measures.

- Adoption of agro forestry by growing trees in waste lands and developing bund side plantations should be propagated both as a measure of soil and moisture conservation and as a source of fodder, timber, green manure, and fuel wood. The government should make available adequate planting material at nominal cost by developing village level nurseries (Kissan Nurseries).

5. Optimising the Benefits of Irrigation

The state is making huge investments in the sector of major and medium irrigation to utilize the water resources available in its major rivers. While the major and medium irrigation works provide irrigation to about 15 lakh hectares, another 20 lakh hectares are irrigated by minor irrigation tanks and irrigation wells. The spread of the benefits of major and medium irrigation projects being confined to only a few districts in the state, it is necessary to give greater attention in future for developing rain water harvesting structures, ground water recharge measures and minor irrigation tanks in every village. Further, new methods of irrigation should be promoted among farmers to derive maximum benefit with the available water. Modern technology should be used for the purpose on the lines of countries like Israel. The Official Group’s recommendations in this regard are as follows:

- The State has over 36,000 minor irrigation tanks which have been built over several centuries and which are not being maintained in a satisfactory condition. Every district must be made to prepare a tank rejuvenation project on the lines of Jalasamvardhane Yojane for restoration of all its tanks within
a time frame of 5 – 10 years. The state’s investments in this sector must correspond to the investments being made in the major irrigation sector and towards subsidies given to irrigation pumpsets.

- The benefits of tank irrigation can be extended to larger numbers of farmers by installation of piped irrigation networks and sprinklers. Minor Irrigation Department should take up a number of pilot projects to popularize this approach which can increase the irrigation potential of minor irrigation tanks by 30 to 50 percent.

- It should be made compulsory for farmers to install micro irrigation facilities like drip system, rain guns, etc., for all irrigation pumpsets using ground water. This will help in promoting greater efficiency in the use of the limited ground water resources. The funds available under the National Horticulture Mission and the NADP should be used for subsidising drip irrigation and piped irrigation networks.

- A single window agency should be established to promote micro irrigation and to facilitate the prompt and efficient disbursement of subsidy for drip irrigation on the model of the Gujarat State Micro Irrigation Corporation.

- The technology of low pressure drip system available in Israel should be propagated through the Universities of Agricultural Sciences for greater economy in the use of water and for promoting precision farming.

- A Comprehensive Ground Water Regulation Legislation should be enacted at the earliest to prevent overexploitation of groundwater resources.
6. Seeds of Quality, Seeds of Prosperity - Improving Seed Replacement Rate

According to many agricultural scientists, one of the main reasons for the low productivity of many field crops in Karnataka is the poor seed replacement rate. This refers to the percentage of area of a crop in which improved / certified seeds are used in a given crop season. The present seed replacement rate in Karnataka is said to be about 5% in pulses and oil seeds and below 20% in other crops in Karnataka. While high value low volume seeds for crops like vegetables and flowers are produced by many private companies, improved seeds for common low value high volume crops like cereals, pulses and oil seeds (except sunflower) are not adequately produced in the private sector. The use of improved seed varieties in such crops is likely to increase yields up to about 30% which would substantially add to farm incomes in the state. Increasing the seed replacement rate in such crops from the present 5% to about 30% calls for a massive effort at stepping up the production of quality seeds. This would also necessitate vast augmentation of the capacity of the State Agricultural Universities to produce breeder seeds and foundation seeds required for multiplication by seed farmers. The Official Group would like to recommend the following measures which will enable the state to attain self sufficiency in seed production for major crops:

- The Seed Village (Beeja Grama) experiment undertaken by the Agricultural Universities has demonstrated a viable model of participative production of quality seeds with the involvement of farmers for meeting the needs of each village. This makes it possible for production of seeds at reasonable cost and ensures the timely availability of quality seeds to farmers.
This model is ideally suited for production of seeds for pulses and oil seeds.

- Adequate grants should be provided to State Agricultural Universities for production of breeder and foundation seeds of various crops particularly seeds of major high volume low value crops like cereals, pulses and oil seeds. As recommended earlier by the Satishchandran Committee (1993), the Universities must implement a time bound programme of about 5 years to produce the required quantity of these seeds.

- Commercial seed production for export as well as for use within the state should be promoted in the districts of Koppal, Bidar, Gadag, Bellary and Haveri which are ideally suited for the purpose as demonstrated by the farmers of the Ranibennur area. This can be achieved through contract farming involving seed production companies.

- The present policy of the State Government of distributing seeds at 75% subsidy has resulted in seeds being available at prices lower than those of grain in some cases. This leads to diversion of valuable seed material for consumption purposes thereby distorting the seed market and depriving many farmers of the benefit of quality seeds. The rates of subsidy should therefore be so structured as to ensure that the seed material is not made cheaper than common grain.


As already pointed out, Karnataka is bestowed with a variety of agroclimatic conditions favourable for the development of horticultural crops. While horticulture crops occupy only about
12% of the net sown area in the State, their contribution to the State Agricultural Domestic Product is more than twenty percent. As the income derived from horticulture per hectare of land is generally higher than in cereals and pulses, the State must exploit the full potential for expanding the area under horticulture. According to many experts, this could be more than doubled if appropriate promotional policies and cropping patterns are adopted. The area under horticultural crops (excluding plantation crops) should therefore be increased to at least 25% in a time frame of about 10 years. The example of the State of Maharashtra which has made great strides in the cultivation of crops like mango, pomegranate, and grapes is worth emulating in this respect. The export performance of horticultural crops (cashew, gherkins, flowers etc.,) in the State has been steadily improving and accounts for nearly 40 percent of the State Agricultural exports, excluding coffee in 2005-06. The importance of dryland horticulture as a supplementary source of income to farmers has already been highlighted. Further, in most parts of the State, it is possible to maximize farm incomes by substituting the present field crops with fruits, vegetables and flowers. The Group recommends the following measures for immediate adoption:

- Most horticultural crops being perishable, facilities for storage, processing and marketing need to be organized carefully for ensuring remunerative returns for farmers. This will require that such crops be grown on a sufficient scale instead of scattered cultivation by individual farmers. A cluster approach should therefore be adopted to ensure that a minimum number of 50 – 100 farmers cultivate a given horticultural crop within a single village or a cluster of 4-5 villages. This will make it possible to have adequate processing and marketing arrangements made on a viable
scale. The group farming approach which was earlier mentioned can be adopted with great advantage in respect of horticultural crops.

- Horticultural crops are also ideally suited for contract farming and farming through **Farmers’ Corporates** (producers’ companies under the Companies Act). The success of gherkin farming in the state through the initiatives of export oriented private firms can be replicated in other crops like mango, tomato, pomegranate, okhra, chilies, lime, banana, etc., This model is also suited to the promotion of floriculture in the state. The Government must therefore actively encourage private entrepreneurs and food processing companies to enter into marketing contracts with farmers growing horticultural crops. It would be advisable to create a contract-farming cell in the Department of Horticulture on the lines of ‘Udyoga Mitra’ in the Department of Industries to facilitate agribusiness companies and farmers’ groups to establish contract farming arrangements.

- The state must also promote ventures by private firms for setting up cold storage and processing facilities on a large scale in every district by providing capital subsidy up to 50% of the investment or viability gap funding.

- The law relating to purchase of agricultural land for installation of cold stores and other processing facilities should be liberalized to permit purchase of agricultural land upto 10 hectares by private entrepreneurs.

- Production of quality planting material and seeds on a sufficient scale is a major precondition to the promotion of horticultural crops in the state. The horticultural farms of
the state government can be given to Agricultural Universities and private firms for setting up mega production centres which can produce planting material in large numbers (millions of seedlings) using modern methods of plant multiplication and biotechnology. These centres can also take up training of farmers in the cultivation and post harvest handling of horticultural crops. The Government’s own Biotechnology Centre at Hulimavu in Bangalore, can serve as a good model in this regard. The State also has some of the leading biotechnology firms in the country who are active in the multiplication of quality planting material. Their whose participation in the development of mega nurseries and training centres should be encouraged by offering them government farms/lands on lease basis.

- Another important advantage that the State has is an excellent tradition of private enterprise in the field of small scale horticulture nurseries. These nurseries could be made to produce huge quantities of planting material and seeds for the quick expansion of horticultural crops. Enactment of a suitable legislation with a certificate mechanism for regulation of production by private nurseries will ensure that reliable high quality planting material is made available to farmers.

- A policy to encourage cultivation of wine quality grapes and the manufacture and marketing of wine on a large scale is currently on the anvil. The State’s Excise Act should be amended to facilitate the implementation of the wine policy.

- At present the National Horticulture Mission covers only 19 districts of the state. This should be extended to the remaining 10 districts taking advantage of the National Agricultural Development Programme.
• Funds available under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme should be made use of to assist small and marginal farmers in all the districts to take-up Horticulture. NREGP guidelines have been liberalized to provide assistance to small farmers in the form of planting material, preparation of land, and maintenance of crops in the initial years.

8. Development of Dairy Farming:

Karnataka’s Dairy industry is one of the most successful initiatives undertaken to increase farmers’ income in the recent years. The state has developed a vast infrastructure on the basis of a cooperative network for not only procurement, processing and marketing of milk but also for promoting dairy farming and veterinary services. The daily procurement of milk in the state is over 3 million litres which results in farmers getting an income of over Rs.1000 crores per year. A very significant aspect of the state’s dairy development is that it generates income for nearly 20 lakhs rural households, in which women play a very important role in the generation of income through dairy farming. Unlike crop husbandry, dairy farming generates a continuous stream of assured income throughout the year meeting the cash needs of the households. Further, as a group activity it promotes collective action and social cohesiveness in the rural society. There is considerable potential for further development of dairy farming in the state by adoption of a number of policy initiatives as recommended below:

• There is an urgent need to upgrade the genetic potential of cross bred cattle in the state to further increase the productivity of dairy animals. The number of crossbred cows in the State is about 16 lakhs at present which can be
increased to about 35 lakhs in ten years. The Karnataka Milk Federation and the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal Husbandry, and Fisheries Sciences University (KVAFSU) should be supported to undertake special breeding programmes by importing quality livestock and germplasm for their cattle breeding farms.

- Extensive and intensive breed upgradation programmes should be taken up in the rural areas through artificial insemination, fertility camps and calf rearing programmes. The Dairy Co-operatives and NGOs should be assisted to set up cattle breeding centres at the Hobli level (or attached to Raitha Samparka Kendras) to provide artificial insemination services in all villages.

- The preservation of quality local breeds by rearing bulls of indigenous stock should also be taken up for conservation of the local breeds of cattle which are suited for both dairy and draught purposes. Appropriate incentives should be provided to selected farmers for such conservation breeding.

- The average productivity of dairy animals in Karnataka continues to be very low on account of poor feeding practices and inadequate supply of quality feed and fodder. Extensive measures should be initiated to propagate the practice of growing quality green fodder along with field crops (as inter crop, under storey crop or bund plantation).

- Incentives in the form of capital subsidy should be offered for setting up cattle feed plants in different parts of the state.

- Karnataka Milk Federation and the District level Milk Unions should be offered support for stepping up their marketing
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9. Developing Poultry Industry:

The poultry industry is growing at a fast pace in Karnataka due to increasing consumer demand for poultry products. At present there are over 560 layer farms and about 2250 broiler farms in the state with nearly 360 lakh birds. However, the industry is not adequately organized inspite of its vast potential for employment generation in the rural areas, particularly among the rural youth. The state must initiate strong policy measures to promote this industry in the rural areas to generate employment opportunities for small and marginal farmers and unemployed youth. The following measures are suggested in this regard:

- Modern poultry farming, unlike conventional backyard poultry, has to be undertaken on a large scale to be viable. This would call for a minimum size of about 1000 birds per unit for broilers and 10,000 for layers. Institutional finance with subsidy needs to be mobilised to facilitate establishment of such poultry units by individual farmers or self help groups on a cluster basis. The recent initiative of NABARD in introducing the Capital Venture Scheme (in which 50% of investment is given at low interest) enables infusion of capital into poultry farming in all parts of the state.

- Intensive training should be given to selected rural youth in scientific poultry farming through the Veterinary University and private hatcheries with tie up for institutional finance and subsidy admissible under SGSY and other programmes. To facilitate the operation of such poultry units, a cluster
approach should be adopted to promote 8 – 10 poultry units in a village or Panchayat area.

- Poultry marketing firms in the private sector should be supported to promote contract farming in the villages on cluster approach. Such firms usually undertake to supply all the inputs including day old chicks, poultry feed, and veterinary services, besides undertaking to provide assured and timely marketing of the birds.

- Poultry farms operate on very thin margins and therefore they are unable to bear the burden of property taxes and other levies. Therefore, poultry units should be exempted from property taxes levied by local bodies.

- As recommended in the case of cattlefeed units, the Group suggests capital subsidy for units manufacturing poultry feed and poultry processing units.

10. Livestock Farming for Meat Production

According to the livestock census carried out in 2003, the state has over 75 lakh sheep, 45 lakh goats, and less than 10 lakh pigs. With the changing food habits of the people the consumption of meat is increasing in the state generating demand for the expansion of meat production. At present, rearing of animals for meat is completely unorganized and is undertaken mainly by small and marginal farmers and landless labourers. It is therefore necessary to support organized processing and marketing of meat through private enterprise. Further, concerted efforts need to be made to upgrade the local breeds of sheep, goats, and pigs and improving the rearing practices. The following measures are to be considered to promote production of quality meat in the state and to increase the income levels of farmers.
• Sheep and Goat farmers need to be organized into self help groups to enable them to access marketing linkages through the newly emerging super markets and retail chain stores. Contract farming can be promoted as an approach to increase the viability of sheep/goat rearing.

• Farmers in Self Help Groups need to be trained in scientific rearing of animals and their transportation. Farmers can be introduced to adopting stall feeding of sheep and goats.

• Livestock farms in the public sector must increase the production of rams and he goats of superior breeds including those suitable for stall feeding. These are to be distributed among farmers for further multiplication and rearing.

• Establishment of modern slaughter houses for scientific processing of meat (of sheep, goats etc.,) is necessary to increase the market (including exports) for meat produced in the state. The Group recommends that modern abattoirs on PPP basis should be set up in different parts of the state preferably in all the Maidan districts of the state which are known for meat production.

11. Overcoming Stagnation in Sericulture

Sericulture has been an important source of income for rural households for over 200 years in Karnataka. With an annual production of 7500 tons, the State has the distinction of producing 50 percent of the total silk production in the country. There are about 1.80 lakh sericulturists and over 11,000 reeling units in the State. Mulberry is cultivated in about 1.00 lakh hectares. While this industry has been facing stiff competition from Chinese silk it continues to provide stable income to about
2 lakh families of farmers and reelers in the state. Moreover, it has scope for further expansion to meet the increasing domestic and international demand for silk fabrics. At the international level, China dominates the market with an annual production of about 1.20 lakh tons of silk as compared to about 15000 tons produced in India. Given the tradition of silkworm rearing in Karnataka, it is possible to increase silk production considerably if measures are taken to upgrade the quality of the silk produced and to improve the technology used in the reeling of silk. The following measures are suggested in this regard:

- There is an urgent need to develop suitable silk worm races to produce quality gradable silk. The KSSRDI at Talghattapura should be strengthened for the purpose. While the research institutions are working in this direction, greater efforts are needed to propagate the rearing of bivoltine silkworm in different parts of the state.

- The Department of Sericulture is promoting improved varieties of mulberry which is now cultivated only in about 30 percent of the area. These should be spread to the entire area through more vigorous extension efforts. Farmers should also be given subsidy for installing micro irrigation for mulberry cultivation on par with the subsidy available for horticulture.

- Silkworm rearing is undertaken mainly at the household level in the villages in somewhat unhygienic environment. Construction of separate rearing sheds and mounting halls would go a long way in improving the quality of silk produced in the state. Farmers should therefore be given institutional finance with subsidy to construct scientifically designed rearing houses and mounting halls.
• Automatic and semi automatic reeling machines should be installed in the private sector to facilitate processing of bivoltine silk. The Group recommends that at least three such units should be established immediately, with 50 percent capital subsidy.

• The state government should prevail on the Central Government to continue anti dumping policies for another 10 years to regulate import of raw silk from other countries.

• At present 30% of the silk is produced on charkhas (about 7300 units). These need to be replaced by filature units to improve the quality of silk. The Group recommends that the Department take up a special project to upgrade at least 50% of the charkha units with institutional finance and subsidy. This can be done under SGSY through Self Help Groups of workers.

12. Universalising Access To Agricultural Credit : Introducing Group Approach

Low levels of agricultural productivity are associated with low investments in the sector. It is therefore necessary to mobilise adequate supply of credit to the sector to enhance its productivity. Also, one of the major factors for the distress of farmers in different parts of Karnataka is their high level of indebtedness involving private and informal money lenders. The Reserve Bank of India has estimated that while Scheduled Banks and Cooperatives have a share of about 70 percent of the credit disbursed to rural households, money lenders and traders account for over 20 percent of the credit obtained by people in the rural areas in Karnataka. Farmers’ representatives from many parts of the State have pointed out indebtedness to informal money lenders as an important reason for the farmers’ distress.
The remedy suggested in this regard is to make institutional credit available to all farmers for both production purposes and meeting consumption needs. Farmers have particularly been emphasizing the need for simplifying the procedures for availing loans from banks by the introduction of Any Time Loans or Simple Credit Limits to each farmer. The Government of India’s policy of promoting financial inclusion of all rural families within a short period goes a long way in ensuring that every farmer in the state has a bank account in the near future. The state also has a good network of banks in the rural areas with 2182 rural and 1058 semi urban branches. The banks in the State are committed to achieving the goal of financial inclusion of all rural households within the next few months. Taking advantage of the above, the state may adopt the following measures to make institutional credit easily available to all farmers.

- The banks should be assisted to carry out a thorough survey of the credit needs of each rural family for both production and consumption purposes as part of their financial inclusion programme. The investment needs of farmers for creating capital assets like irrigation wells, and acquiring farm machinery, equipment and livestock should be given due priority in surveying the credit needs of households.

- Kisan Credit Cards and General Credit Cards should be issued to all rural households with appropriate rechargeable credit limits to provide easy access to credit to all farmers. This being part of the approved policy of the NABARD, the State Government should facilitate the universalisation of such credit cards by providing the necessary documentation support through local administration.
• Self Help Groups (or crop/activity groups/joint liability groups) of farmers should be given a revolving credit limit of about Rs.50,000/- (in addition to individual credit limits mentioned earlier) to enable them to meet urgent and unforeseen financial needs of their members for hospitalization, educational expenses of children etc.,

• Banks should be persuaded to provide loans for capital investments by farmers on easy terms on the lines of **Synd Jai Kisan Loans** provided by Syndicate Bank which advances loans upto 50% of the value of a farmer's land holding or 5 times the value of the farmer’s annual agricultural produce. These loans are advanced even for repayment of private loans.

• Women in farmers’ household should be provided separate credit facilities to take up activities generating supplementary income like handicrafts, dairy farming, backyard poultry, goat rearing, rabbit rearing, etc.

• Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies must be permitted to access funds from commercial banks to enhance their resources and introduce greater professionalism in their management.

• The proposal of the Reserve Bank to get banks to appoint ‘Business Correspondents’ in the villages to make financial services easily accessible to people should be tried out at the earliest to reduce the role of informal money lenders.

13. **Augmenting Infrastructure for Processing and Storage**

The objectives of agricultural development include not only enhancing the productivity of agriculture but also maximising the
value of the produce generated. Value addition to agricultural produce involves proper post harvest processing, grading, packing, transportation, and storage. The poor handling of farm produce including the handling of grains, fruits, vegetables, meat etc., results in a loss of upto 30% of the produce. This also considerably reduces the value realized by the farmers. Provision of post harvest processing and storage facilities therefore assumes great importance in increasing the income levels of the farmers of Karnataka. The following measures may be taken on priority to provide the required support to the agricultural sector.

- The absence of proper threshing facilities in villages forces many farmers to use inefficient unscientific methods of threshing including crushing the crop on the roads and trampling by cattle etc., With very small investments it is possible to create **Community Threshing Yards** in different parts of each village to enable farmers to thresh their crop in time and by using appropriate equipment. State Government should make available grants to the Grama Panchayats to create at least one community threshing complex per village with an area of about one acre to enable several farmers to do their threshing simultaneously.

- Non availability of scientifically designed threshing equipment forces farmers to use unscientific methods of threshing with considerable crop damage. Facilities should be created in the private sector for custom hiring of threshing equipment by providing upto 50% of the cost of the equipment as subsidy. Self help groups of farmers may be provided subsidy upto 75% for acquiring threshing equipment for various crops.

- Grading, packing and transportation of fruits, vegetables and flowers greatly adds to the value of these commodities.

At
present, many farmers transport vegetables and fruits in bulk without any packing resulting in substantial deterioration of these commodities at the storage and sale points. To promote proper handling of vegetables and fruits individual farmers and farmer’s groups should be given intensive training by the Department of Horticulture in the grading of produce and in the use of proper crates / packing cartons. As part of the National Horticulture Mission farmers should be provided with subsidy to purchase crates and other equipment. Similar training for handling other forms of agricultural produce should be given by the Department of Agriculture.

- The absence of cold store facilities with sufficient capacity has constrained the development of Horticulture sector in the state. Another urgent need of the sector is the creation of Individual Quick Freezing (IQF) facilities which the State does not have at present. The state must promote creation of such facilities on PPP model by providing land, and part of capital investment to private entrepreneurs. Several such proposals prepared by the Karnataka Agricultural Produce Processing and Export Corporation (KAPPEC) should be considered for approval with budgetary support.

- The policy of creation of rural godowns of small capacity at village level has had limited impact on the agricultural sector. The farmers are unable to ensure scientific storage in such godowns of small capacity at the village level. Also they are unable to obtain timely loans by pledging their produce in such godowns. It is therefore necessary to create godowns with large capacity located at the assembling markets or terminal markets. The Department of Agricultural Marketing
has prepared a plan for setting up major storage facilities for agricultural produce in 52 market centres at a cost of about Rs.37.50 crores. The State may consider implementing the project on priority. Also, storage facilities created in the private sector should be encouraged to establish necessary links with credit institutions to provide pledge loans to farmers and facilitate scientific storage of produce till it can be sold at remunerative prices.

14. Agricultural Marketing and Exports

Consequent upon the amendment of the State’s legislation regarding marketing of agricultural produce, private trading companies and entrepreneurs are allowed to establish private markets for agricultural produce. This opens up the possibility of farmers having a choice of markets to sell their produce. However, for them to have the benefit of adequate competition among traders, the State has to facilitate the creation of new market yards in the private sector. At the same time the State should ensure remunerative prices for the farmers’ produce by administering a Minimum Support Price and by preventing excessive and unseasonal production of various crops. While the marketing of agricultural produce of several varieties is admittedly complex, the state could adopt the following policy measures in the near future to assist the farmers in marketing their produce.

- Creation of **Specialised Commodity Market** complexes and Terminal Markets is likely to streamline the marketing of agricultural commodities. For example *special markets for food grains, oil seeds, fruits and vegetables will facilitate proper handling and storage of the produce. Private entrepreneurs should be assisted by the state to create such commodity markets.* These markets could eventually adopt
electronic trading procedures and Futures Trading to ensure stable and remunerative prices.

- The Agricultural Marketing Board should be strengthened by infusion of professional marketing talent and creation of e-governance facilities. The Marketing Board should create an electronic network to disseminate market information widely among farmers through information kiosks established in each Grama Panchayat. Funds available under NADP can be made use of for creating such infrastructure.

- The market intervention fund administered by the Agricultural Marketing Board should be increased to Rs.1000 crores to provide support to farmers when the prices of agricultural produce become uneconomically low.

- The state government must aggressively promote export of agricultural and horticultural produce by offering reimbursement of transportation costs as done by the Central Government for sugar. Facilities for handling Horticultural produce should be created near the state’s Air Ports so that fruits, vegetables and flowers can be flown to distant markets without loss of time.

- Special promotional subsidies should be offered for products with niche markets like organic food products, spices, medicinal and aromatic plants, and flowers.

15. Agricultural Research, Education and Extension

As already pointed out, the average yields of most agricultural crops in Karnataka are well below the national average levels (which are in many cases below the international average). This yield gap calls for a great effort in mounting
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Research projects to improve the productivity of various crops. This is necessary for the development of locally suited crop varieties and package of practices appropriate to the local conditions. Further, even after such development is achieved at the laboratory level massive extension efforts are needed to transfer this know how to the field level. In the above context, the state must consider a quantum jump in its investments in the field of agricultural research and a qualitative change in the strategy of agricultural extension. The following specific measures are recommended in that regard.

- The State has two reputed Universities of Agricultural Sciences, whose research efforts need to be greatly augmented. This will call for equipping 57 research stations of these Universities with facilities for both crop specific and problem oriented research projects and providing them with adequate and qualified manpower. The budget for agricultural research needs is to be increased to about 5 times its present level over a period of the next five years.

- Research and Development activities by private seed production and marketing companies can be encouraged by permitting purchase of agricultural lands.

- At present the state has only one *Krishi Vignana Kendra* per district. The State may establish its own technology dissemination centres on the lines of KVKs at the rate of one per taluk over a period of the next 10 years.

- The agricultural extension machinery of the government must be suitably expanded to make available the services of Agriculture / Horticulture graduates at the rate of at least one for a cluster of 10 villages (2 Grama Panchayats). These
graduates should be available as a team of 4-5 persons at the Hobli level with each hobli or cluster of villages at a Farm Clinic. About 1000 such Farm Clinics should be established in the State to provide technical advice to farmers in every village for all major crops. **The multi disciplinary team at the farm clinic (including Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture and Sericulture extension workers) must be given the responsibility of ensuring adoption of improved technology according to a specified programme in the area of their jurisdiction.** The present Raitha Samparka Kendras can be developed into such Farm Clinics to make available extension services of the Departments of Agriculture, Horticulture, and Sericulture.

- The extension personnel must adopt a **project approach to extension** in which they will be responsible for advising farmers not only on crop production but also on procurement of inputs and credit and accessing processing and marketing facilities.

- The Agricultural Universities should train selected agricultural graduates into specialist consultants for different crops who can provide technical and commercial advice to farmers on a consultancy basis. The services of such consultants should be available in each taluk.

- Farmers’ Training Centres should be established in each Agricultural Research Station to provide crop specific training to farmers. These training schools must be equipped with facilities for farmers stay and field visits.

- The diversification of farming and the group farming approach recommended in this report call for a new and integrated
approach to extension services. We suggest the use of NGOs for mobilization and training of farmers’ groups in each village. These agencies can also act as links between the Krishi Samparka Kendra/Farm clinics and the farmers’ groups and effectively channelise the extension services of various departments to the groups. The Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, etc. can bear part of the expenditure of the NGOs which can also receive assistance from financial institutions operating in the area. We feel that the involvement of NGOs and PRIs in the process of agriculture related extension work will lend a new dynamism to these services which the sector which perhaps cannot be achieved merely creating a large number of posts at the field level.

- Agricultural Extension Services should aim at making agriculture **knowledge intensive**. Information and Communication Technologies should be extensively used by the extension machinery to reach out to farmers. The Agricultural Universities and extension agencies must produce educative material in the form of CDs for being telecast through TV channels and cable TV Networks. Such material should also be stocked in the village level libraries (Panchayat Libraries) for being used by farmers as and when required. These libraries could be equipped with a ‘Farm Information Section’ with audio-visual equipment for the use of farmers.

**16. Application of Information Technology in Agriculture**

Karnataka has been a leading State in the country in using Information Technology in various aspects of governance. The well
acclaimed *Bhoomi* Application has revolutionised the maintenance of land records and made it easy for millions of Karnataka’s farmers to obtain their land records whenever they need them. Over 200 lakh land records have been centralized in its data centre connected through a robust V-SAT Network. The Departments of Agriculture and Agriculture Marketing are already operating internet portals to disseminate information on the recommended practices for various crops and information on markets for various items of agricultural produce. The newly introduced ‘Nemmadi’ centres in 800 Hobli level villages have made access to internet based information easy for people in the rural areas. The official group is of the view that application of Information Technology holds great promise for facilitating the development of Agriculture and allied activities in several ways. The use of internet and other electronic media can be the most cost effective and useful way of disseminating technology and commercial information to promote the development of agriculture and allied activities. The group would like to recommend the following measures to tap the potential of Information Technology for the benefit of farmers:

- While applying for sanction of loans from banks farmers experience considerable difficulty in obtaining No-Due Certificates/No-Objection Certificates from various banks in an area to satisfy the lending bank that the applicants have not already borrowed from other institutions. It is possible to integrate the list of farmers who have borrowed/have accounts in any bank with the data on land records maintained by the Bhoomi system. This would enable the banks to obtain NOCs from the concerned banks without the farmers having to approach several banks for the purpose. The Bhoomi data can also be made accessible to every bank
branch in the rural areas so that the banks can access information on the land holdings of any of their clients without the need for the farmers to obtain such records often.

- The Agriculture portal on the internet should be used effectively by the Department of Agriculture to provide information to farmers anywhere in the State. A special technical cell should update the information on the portal on a daily basis giving advice to farmers on specific crops in each taluk based on the seasonal and crop conditions prevailing in those areas. The farmers should be encouraged to send their queries to the portal for which answers could be furnished through the portal within a day. Such an interactive portal (through e-mail, SMS etc.) will greatly enhance the relevance of technical advice to individual farmers.

- A similar interactive portal can be operated by the Department of Agricultural Marketing or an independent agency dedicated to gathering market information for farmers. The information on prices of various commodities in different markets in the State can be posted on the portal on a daily basis. Further, adopting the e-Commerce mode registered self help groups of farmers can offer their produce to buyers on the internet and buyers could bid for such produce in different locations. The Agriculture Marketing Department should consider setting up an e-Commerce facility linked to storage godowns to facilitate on line sale and purchase of agricultural produce. This would greatly reduce the transaction costs incurred by farmers in marketing their produce and enable them to secure reasonable prices.

- While access to internet is still not universal in the rural areas of Karnataka, the other electronic media like the radio
and television have reached the homes of almost all farmers. The Department of Agriculture/The Agricultural Universities can use the potential of these media more effectively by having dedicated radio and television channels. The viability of such channels for various special interests has been proved by the existence of channels dedicated to music, fashion, religious discourses, yoga etc. In the alternative, these agencies can buy television/radio time from existing networks to beam programmes relating to agriculture and allied activities. The great merit of the radio and television is that they are effective in reaching out to even illiterate farmers.

17. Farmers’ Welfare: Special Attention Needed

About 60 percent of Karnataka’s population are engaged in agriculture as farmers or as agricultural labourers. Among the landholding farmers, nearly 75 percent, or about 57 lakh farmers have holdings of about 2 hectares or less. Thus, the welfare of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers should be an important aspect of the States’ policy in the agriculture sector.

Given the small, and in most cases uneconomical size of the their land holdings, the farmers in the State subsist on low incomes. The State’s estimated Gross Domestic Product of Rs.1,94,009 crores (2006-07) includes Rs.35,306 crores from the Agriculture sector. This income distributed among 71 lakh farmers’ households gives an average household income of only Rs.52,650 per annum. This works out to only about Rs.10,500 per capita as compared to the per capita income of the State’s overall population which was Rs.34,250 for 2006-07. Thus, the per capita income of agricultural households is less than one third of the per capita income of the State’s overall population. On the other hand, the per capita income of the non-agricultural
households in the State, depending mainly on industry and services, taken separately, works out to over Rs.75,000 per annum, more than seven times that of the population depending upon agriculture.

Given the low level of their incomes, the agricultural households in the State naturally have very low or negative savings. This makes it difficult for them to absorb any economic shocks like failure of crops due to the vagaries of seasonal conditions. They are also unable to cope with unforeseen eventualities like major illness or death of any member of the family, accidents, etc. Most agricultural households and agricultural labourers also find it difficult or impossible to finance the education of their children beyond the primary school level thereby eliminating the possibility of the upward mobility of the future generations. It is therefore necessary to design a number of policy measures to assist farmers to overcome the above handicaps in addition to the initiatives aimed at increasing the productivity of the agricultural sector in the State. The following specific policy measures may be considered in this regard.

- **At present, crop insurance schemes cover only a few selected crops and are operative only in some parts of the State. The coverage of crop insurance should be extended to include all the major crops throughout the State. Crop insurance schemes should be administered in a user-friendly manner specially for the benefit of small and marginal farmers.**

- **A Special Farmers’ Welfare Fund** may be set up by collecting a 0.5 percent cess on sale of agricultural produce, which can be supplemented by matching contributions by the Government. This fund can be used for providing exgratia relief to farmers in the case of death of an earning member of
the household aged between 25-50 years and to fund hospitalization for specified medical emergencies.

- A Special health insurance scheme should be introduced for all rural households to cover major illnesses like cardiovascular diseases, Kidney failure, etc., on the lines of the Yashaswini scheme currently in operation.

- A scheme of educational loans should be introduced through Banks to finance education of farmers’ children beyond the Secondary School Level and upto Postgraduate education. Loans should also be available to farmers to meet obligatory expenses relating to children’s marriages.

- To enable farmers’ children to receive technical training for employment in the non-agricultural sector, Industrial Training Institutes and Vocational Training Centres should be established at the Hobli level at the rate of at least one for every 50,000 rural population. This is extremely important from the point of enabling the children of farmers to find more remunerative employment in the manufacturing and Services sectors.

- A Scheme of organised study visits by selected farmers’ groups to different states and abroad should be introduced to provide exposure to modern agricultural practices.

18. **Upliftment of Agricultural Labourers:**

According to the census of India 2001, the workforce in Karnataka, which has 193.56 lakh 'main workers' consists of 131 lakhs workers in the Agriculture sector. Out of them, an estimated 62.32 lakh workers or 47 percent are agricultural labourers, most of them landless or owing a marginal extent of
land. Wage labour in Agriculture related activities is their main or sole source of their livelihood. Agricultural laborers are not employed round the year with the average wage hovering well below the statutory minimum wage (Rs.69 in 2007) in most places. (Subject to some seasonal variation).

The low productivity of the present day agriculture in the State in terms of output per hectare and output per unit of labour has resulted in the low wage levels for agricultural labour. The seasonal nature of demand for agricultural labour further results in extremely low level of household income among agricultural labourers. A majority of the landless agricultural labourers are not only asset poor but also socially disadvantaged due to discriminatory social practices based on caste. Policy measures are therefore needed not only to protect the livelihoods, but also to promote the social upliftment of agricultural labourers in Karnataka.

- The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) guarantees the provision of wage employment of 100 person days per year to any registered household. This programme which is now being implemented in eleven districts of Karnataka is likely to be extended to the entire State in the near future. The State must take up a massive drive in all the districts to register willing rural workers and launch the NREGA works on a systematic basis. As already pointed out elsewhere in this Report, works like land development, afforestation, horticulture and water conservation schemes should be planned in each district to utilize the NREGA funds for enhancing the productivity of Agriculture and allied activities.
Agricultural workers in Karnataka need to be trained in the use of modern implements and machinery to increase their productivity. They should also be made to acquire skills relevant to crop husbandry and livestock production using the latest technology. The extension services of Agriculture and other Departments must organize short duration training courses (for one or two weeks) for agricultural labourers in the operation and maintenance of Agricultural machinery, water conservation oriented farming, scientific care of livestock, etc.

Agricultural Labourers need to be trained to impart skills enabling them to take up employment in non agricultural activities during the off season periods. The Department of Agriculture or the Department of Labour can organize short duration training programmes for rural workers in masonry, carpentry, steel fabrication, bricklaying, carpet weaving, garment manufacture, embroidery and other handicrafts, agro-processing etc. which can ensure that the agricultural labourers are gainfully employed during the periods when the demand for labour in agricultural operations is low. Surplus manpower in the agricultural sector can also be helped through such programmes to shift to other sectors.

Self Help Groups of agricultural labourers should be provided micro finance facility to acquire tools, tackles, and small machinery to take up work relating to agricultural operations on ‘group contract’ basis. The ‘group contract’ system enables the workers to achieve higher productivity and secure more remunerative wages. Well organized groups of workers can also cope better with seasonal migration for securing more remunerative employment. Groups of Agricultural workers
can also organize their own group catering and infant care arrangements for the convenience of working mothers.

19. Promoting Non Agricultural Activities in Rural Areas:

It is well known that in India, as well as in Karnataka a very large proportion of the total workforce (58.4 percent in India and 55.7 percent in Karnataka, according to National Sample Survey – 61st Round) are employed in Agriculture and allied activities. Not only is this proportion very large, but also, in absolute terms, the population depending upon this sector has gone up from 75.67 lakhs in 1960-61 to 131 lakhs in 2000-01 in Karnataka. The contribution of this sector to the GDP/GSDP is, however, less than twenty percent and is declining (in relative terms) over the years. The World Development Report 2008 published by the World Bank recognizes this phenomenon in saying that “Agriculture grows absolutely and declines relatively”. While every attempt should therefore be made to increase the productivity of agriculture and allied activities, it should be recognised that in view of the higher growth potential in manufacturing and services sectors, the bulk of the workforce in the country/state should shift to activities in those sectors. If adequately equipped with relevant skills, workers moving to other sectors can access higher incomes in those activities with faster growth prospects. This will also benefit the fewer remaining in the agricultural sector by enabling them to increase their productivity and secure better livelihood. The development experience of most countries in Europe, North America and South America clearly shows that with the adoption of improved technology a small proportion of a country’s workers are able to produce adequate food and attain optimum productivity in agriculture and livestock production. In the above context, it is imperative that the State initiates major policy
measures to educate and train rural population for non agricultural employment, to create infrastructure and to actively promote the growth of the non agricultural sectors in small towns and rural areas. The Official Group suggests the following measures to be taken in this regard.

- Infrastructure for setting up small scale manufacturing units should be developed in all towns with a population of more than 50000. Out of about 10,000 households in a town, at least one percent (100) should be supported to start industrial or service oriented enterprises. Karnataka which has about 250 such towns should develop them into Rural Business Hubs. Mini Industrial Estates with infrastructure for setting up 10-25 small / tiny industrial units should be established in about 1000 centres particularly Hobli head quarters and larger villages.

- Karnataka has about 10,500 high schools in the State from which about eight lakh students appear for their 10th Standard Examination every year. While about five lakh take up higher education in colleges the remaining three lakh young people are left to be absorbed by the agricultural sector or unorganized trade and services sector. These young people need to be given training to equip them with skills to make them employable in the industrial or organized services sector which are both facing a shortage of skilled manpower. Agricultural households have this vast reservoir of manpower in the form of rural youth who can be developed into a valuable resource with some basic training. This would enable the State to meet the demand for skilled manpower both within the State and outside, even in other countries. We suggest that the State expand the number and capacity of
its Industrial Training Institutes to train at least two lakh rural youth every year.

- The State is running a number of vocational education courses in Junior Colleges in small towns. These courses are officially recognised as being academically equal to pre-university education. The content of these vocational education courses is inadequate to equip students for employment in the respective trades. The Government must consider merging these courses with the existing or new ITIs to provide more rigorous and practical training to students.

- The efforts of Government to promote the development of industries in the rural areas have met with limited success in the past. The main reasons for this is that the emphasis in schemes like “VISHWA” was to promote industries based on local materials and traditional skills. The products of such industries were also meant for the local markets. With the changes that have taken place in the context of globalization, even small units must aim at using sophisticated technology to produce goods for the wider national or international market. The example of small goods production in China by hundreds of thousands of household level enterprises aimed at meeting the global demand for toys, curios and utility items is a great model to study in this regard. The Government should consider launching a separate Mission for promoting rural enterprises after studying the Chinese model of TVEs (Township and Village Enterprises). We suggest that a team of experts in the field of rural industries be deputed along with representatives of financial institutions like RRBs to study the functioning of small and tiny industries in China.
This will enable them to work out detailed strategies for promoting village level enterprises in the State.

- The Karnataka State Financial Corporation, and the Karnataka Small Scale Industries Development Corporation have in the past played an important role in the promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises in the State. These Organizations could be strengthened to use their expertise in the promotion of industries for establishing rural industrial centers in small towns and villages.

**20. Karnataka Agriculture Mission – 2007:**

The official Group is of the view that the time has come for the State to give a new thrust to the development of Agriculture. The State’s approach to agricultural development should now have a new orientation to make the cost-risk-return structure of agriculture remunerative to farmers, a majority of them being small farmers cultivating dry lands. Also, the implementation of various policy measures and programmes by the departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Sericulture, Rural Development, Co-operation, Watershed Development, Irrigation, etc., and the Agricultural Universities needs to be more effectively co-ordinated if farmers have to derive optimum benefit from these measures. From this point of view the Group recommends the adoption of a Mission Approach to implement the policy measures listed in this report. **The Karnataka Agriculture Mission 2007** should therefore be launched for effective co-ordination of the efforts of various agencies involved in the development of Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Animal Husbandry, Forestry, Irrigation and related activities. The activities of the Mission should be directed and coordinated by a **Mission Co-ordination Committee** headed by the Additional Chief
Secretary and Development Commissioner. This Committee will have representatives of various Government Departments, Agricultural Universities, Agricultural Economists, Farmers’ representatives and NGOs as its members. The Commissioners / Directors of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Sericulture and Agricultural Marketing Departments will be the Mission Directors in charge of various aspects of the Mission. The Mission will be responsible for planning and coordinating the implementation of the State’s policies for Agricultural Development based on the following principles:

1. Diversification of farming for sustainability;
2. Group farming for viability of small farms;
3. Integrated multi disciplinary extension services at the field level;
4. Universal access to credit to farmers;
5. Partnership with business for value addition and marketing.

The Mission co-ordination Committee’s work may be overseen by a **High Level Committee headed by the Chief Minister** with the Minister for Agriculture as its Vice Chairman. The High Level Committee will lay down the policy framework for the Mission and approve the Annual Action Plans prepared by the Mission Coordination Committee. The Mission Coordination Committee will monitor the implementation of the action plans through periodical reviews and issue necessary directions to various implementing agencies for the effective and coordinated implementation of the tasks of the Mission. The Mission will have a time frame of five years within which specific targets set for the Mission for the development of Agriculture and allied activities are to be achieved. The Phase-I of the Mission can cover about 12
districts of Karnataka, including mainly the Maidan districts depending upon dry land agriculture. In Phase-II the remaining districts can be covered after making suitable adaptation of the Mission strategy to suit Local agro climatic conditions.

The various measures recommended by the Group for reducing the distress of farmers in Karnataka and strengthening their economic condition have additional financial implications for Government. While the cost of implementing each of the recommendations is to be worked out in detail by the concerned departments, the Official Group has estimated the overall requirement to be about Rs.7000 crores for a period of five years. This estimate includes only investments in the public sector and does not include investments that could be mobilised from the private sector in various critical aspects of the agricultural sector like agro processing and marketing. It also does not include the credit disbursements to farmers from financial institutions. The additional expenditure required for implementing the Group’s recommendations can be mobilised as part of the Central and State Plan schemes during the 11th Five Year Plan period. Further, the newly introduced National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) of Government of India offers a great opportunity to implement many of the measures recommended in the form of special NADP projects funded by the Central Government. The additional investments required by the State Government to qualify for Central assistance under NADP also give adequate scope for accommodating most of the special initiatives recommended in this report.

Apart from mobilizing the resources needed, the implementation of the above recommendations will involve a great deal of effort on the part of various departments in working out
detailed strategies and procedures for their implementation. We are of the view that a high level committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary & Development Commissioner should immediately be set up by the Government to guide the concerned departments in working out detailed proposals for implementing the recommendations. These proposals can then form part of the Annual Action Plans of the Agriculture Mission recommended by the Group. It is felt that all the recommendations of the Group (except those with a different period indicated in the report) should be implemented to the fullest extent within a span of five years to enable farmers to reap the fruits of accelerated development within a short period.

It is hoped that the recommendations of the Group will enable the State Government to formulate a New Deal for the farmers of Karnataka paving the way for the accelerated growth of the sector and the realisation of the welfare of the farmers.
Members of the Official Group

M.R. SREENIVASA MURTHY
Chairman
Principal Secretary, Finance Department

A. RAMASWAMY
Principal Secretary
Department of Agriculture and Horticulture

K. JAIRAJ
Principal Secretary
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S. SELVA KUMAR
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Dept. of Agriculture Marketing

P. RAVIKUMAR
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Department of Co-operation

YOGENDRA TRIPATHI
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RAJNEESH GOEL
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University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad

B.A. CHANNAPPA GOWDA
Director
KAPPEC Ltd

DR. R. RAJANNA
Member Secretary
Director, Department of Agriculture
Annexure - ‘A’

Summary of problems represented and suggestions made by the farmers from different districts at a direct dialogue with the Hon’ble Chief Minister on 14th June 2007 at Bangalore

I CROP LOAN:

• Whenever farmers are in need of direct assistance, there should be provision to obtain Any Time Loan of Rs.25,000/- along with long term loans.
• Full credit supports to small and marginal farmers.
• Waiver of farmers loans obtained from nationalized banks.
• Loans to be sanctioned for medical and children education purpose also.
• Credit to be made available in the month of April – May to all farmers.
• Details of credit, crop insurance, and other financial matters related to farming should be recorded in a separate Pass Book and that has to issued to farmers.
• Extend the credit based on the value of land possessed by the farmers.
• Recovery of loan based on the yield level.
• Over draft facilities to be provided to the farmers.
• Prevention of acquiring and auctioning of land, houses when farmers fails to pay loans.
• Private loans cause more suicides. Money lenders who charge interest more than 15% to be punished.
• Need to extend long term loans at 4% interest.
• The loans given in the drought prone year 2004-05 to be waived off.
• Waiver of loans by the banks where farmers die accidentally.
• Loans due to floods, natural calamity and other damages to be waived off.
II GROUND WATER AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:

- A policy of one cow to each house, a farm pond and a minimum of five trees to every field to be enforced strictly.

- A farmer should become self sufficient through organic farming/natural farming by adopting practices like Jeevamrutha, Panchagavya etc.

- Promotion of cattle based farming by giving subsidy to Desi cows. Similarly, importance be given to tree based agriculture.

- Formulation of Law for construction of Krishi Honda in each acre of land.

- Training to farmers on proper construction of Krishi Honda, Ingu Gundhi and Check dams so as to enhance ground water level.

- A tank for every village to increase the ground water, to be constructed under National Horticulture Mission.

- Tank bund encroachments to be strictly prevented.

- Support to construct Krishi Honda should be extended to all group of farmers and same should be recorded in their Pahani (RR).

- No submergence of fertile lands of farmers under major irrigation projects. Farmers lands should not be given for conversion to develop residential sites.

- Rejuvenation of open wells and tanks is required.

- Rain water harvesting has to be followed seriously.

- Prohibition of illegal mining and transportation of sand.

III ELECTRICITY:

- Uninterrupted supply of quality electricity for irrigation pump sets and free supply of electricity for 8 hours per day.

- Measures to produce low cost electricity from Almatti Reservoir.

- Subsidy for Solar Electric Fence, light, drier and pump sets.

- Waivering of electricity pump set bills ranging from Rs.10,000 to Rs.15,000.
IV  IRRIGATION:

- Create a revolving fund to States to utilize its share of water from the major rivers.
- Improvement in the working of Upper Krishna Project.
- Early release of water from the dams, to enable timely sowings and to ensure profitable cropping pattern.
- Repair works of irrigation canals to be undertaken prior to crop seasons.
- Completion of all lift irrigation projects.
- Integrated irrigation programs to be implemented in Bijapur district.
- Implementation of Almatti – B- Scheme to provide irrigation for Kushtagi, Koppal and Yelburga taluks.
- Completion of “Kalasa Bandhuri Nala” works immediately.
- Measures to recharge bore wells through Ghataprabha Left Bank Canal.
- Nugu Irrigation Project to be completed as soon as possible.
- Revitalization of all tanks as per the JSYS scheme.

V  SEED AND INPUT DISTRIBUTION:

- Simple and easy schemes are needed in input distribution.
- Promotion of “seed village” concept seriously throughout the state.
- Measures to check the supply of spurious seeds, fertilisers and pesticides.
- Seed production program to be implemented in Javalagere Seed Farm.
- Establishment of seed banks at villages and distribute local varieties with special subsidy.
- Bio fertilizer usage to be encouraged.
- Research to find remedy for yellow leaf disease and other pests attacking areca nut in the traditional growing regions.
- Restrict license only to qualified input dealers.
• Continuation of certified seed distribution program at 75% subsidy.
• Compensation for farmers who have incurred loss from Chamatkar Cotton.
• Supply of quality seed materials in potato and opening up of community cold storages in the major growing regions.

VI SUPPORT PRICE:
• Minimum Support Prices on the lines of China model to be adopted.
• Minimum Support Price for crops be decided scientifically based on cost of production of the crops.
• Minimum Support Prices of crops have to be announced prior to sowing of crops.
• Buying of crops when there is fall in market price and rationing them through PDS.
• Representation to be given to farmers while fixing support prices.

VII IMPROVEMENT OF AGRICULTURE MARKETING:
• Marketing system prevailing in Milk and Silk is also needed for agricultural crops.
• The HOPCOMS model of marketing system is needed for other crops.
• Buyback system to be adopted at fixed rates. Buyback centers for agricultural produce to be installed at Grama Panchayat level.
• Buying of jowar and wheat at higher prices and their distribution through PDS should be undertaken.
• SAPHAL marketing system should be adopted in all districts.
• Value addition should be encouraged for all agricultural produces.
• Cold storage facilities should be made available.
• Establishment of godowns at Gramapanchayat levels.
• Provision of marketing system without the interference of brokers. Middlemen net work should be avoided.
• Establishment of a separate Potato Board.
• Proper extension of crop protection, storage and marketing information for turmeric in Chamarajanagar district.

• Proper marketing information and arrangement for vanilla produced in Maland and coastal regions.

VIII IMPORT AND EXPORT POLICY:

• Measures to restrict open market imports of fruits, vegetables and other produces.

• To establish training centers to orient export based agriculture.

• GOI to be requested to levy 300% tax to avoid arecanut import.

• Buyback arrangements should be arranged at remunerative prices.

• Measures to encourage value addition of agricultural produces.

• Promotion of export of marine products in the costal districts having easy access to ports.

IX CROP INSURANCE:

• 10% farmers share and 90% government share to be considered while charging insurance premium.

• Scientific crop insurance Scheme to be implemented by strengthening the present one.

• In addition to waiver of loans, farmers should get insurance relief also.

• Arrangements to be made for timely payment of crop insurance amount.

• Crop Insurance should be made compulsory for all farmers obtaining agricultural loans.

• Crop Insurance should be considered at individual level during crop losses and to be implemented at Panchayat level.

• The crop insurance amount for the year 2003-04 to be released immediately.

X AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION:

• Agricultural scientists to concentrate more on crop specific and problem oriented research.
• Research to be focused more on increasing agricultural productivity.
• Implementation of schemes more effectively at Grama Panchayat level.
• Establishment of agriculture clinics throughout the State.
• Permission and incentives to agricultural graduates to involve in the marketing of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, machineries and other agri. inputs.
• Propagation of scientific jagary making techniques and marketing in the major sugarcane growing regions.
• R & D efforts to develop and promote long staple cotton in major cotton growing regions.

XI NEW AGRICULTURAL POLICY ISSUES:
• Permanent measures for flood control and other natural calamities.
• A revival package for all co-operative sugar factories in Karnataka.
• Appointing farmers representatives in food, agriculture and irrigation departments.
• Non existence of marketing policy. Hence, a separate market policy especially for horticultural crops.
• Agriculture to be considered as ‘industry’.
• A separate budget for agriculture sector.
• Policy for advanced crop production to be adopted.
• The patent acts and other acts have lead to farmer’s suicide. These have to be changed.
• Profitable price policy be implemented for agriculture crops on the lines of Gujarat model.
• It is essential to ensure livelihood security thru an Act to prevent suicide of farmers.
Annexure – ‘B’

List of Members of the Official Group constituted vide Government Order No.RDP 65 REP 2007, Bangalore, dated 5th July 2007

I. Members of the Official Group:

1. Mr. M.R. Sreenivasa Murthy, Principal Secretary, Finance Department, Government of Karnataka Chairman
2. Mr. Ramaswamy, Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Horticulture, Government of Karnataka Member
3. Mr. K.Jairaj, Principal Secretary, RD & PR Department, Government of Karnataka Member
4. Mr. P. Ravikumar, Secretary, Department of Cooperation, Government of Karnataka Member
5. Mr. Yogendra Tripathi, Secretary, Finance Department, GOK Member
6. Mr. Rajneesh Goel, Commissioner, Department of Agriculture Member
7. Mr. S. Selva Kumar / Mr. M. Laxminarayana, Commissioner, Dept. of Agriculture Marketing Member
8. Mr. Sandeep Dave, Commissioner, Watershed Development Dept. Member
9. Dr. Ramakrishnappa, / Dr. G.K. Vasanthakumar, Director, Department of Horticulture Member
10. Dr. P.G. Chengappa, Vice Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore Member
11. Dr. J.H. Kulkarni, Vice Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad Member
12. Mr. B.A. Channappa Gowda, Managing Director, Karnataka State Agricultural Produce Processing & Export Corporation Ltd. Member
13. Dr. R.Rajanna./Dr. M. Mallappa, Director, Dept. of Agriculture Member Secretary

II. Special Invitees who participated in the meetings of the Official Group

1. Dr. D.S. Ashwath, Commissioner, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Sciences
2. Mr. Mohammad Sanaulla, Commissioner of Sericulture.
3. Dr. Srinivas Gowda R.R., Vice chancellor, KVAFSU, Bidar
4. Mr. B.S. Hiremath, Director, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj

Improving the Economic Condition of Farmers
5. Mr. C.M. Shirol, Director, Rural development and Panchayat Raj
6. Dr. Hanchinala R.R, Director of Research, UAS, Dharwad
7. Dr. T.K. Prabhakar Shetty, Research Director, UAS, Bangalore
8. Dr. Eshwarappa G, Extension Director, UAS, Bangalore
9. Dr. Krishna Naik, L, Director of Extension, UAS, Dharwad
10. Dr. T.N. Prakash. Professor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore
11. Dr. Sarvesh K.V. Additional Director of Agriculture
12. Dr. Govindayya, M.G. KVA&F University, Bidar
13. Dr. Nuthan D. ADR, UAS, Bangalore
14. Mr. R. Ramalingegowda, Managing Director, KMF
15. Dr. Syed Ahmad, Managing Director, KMPMC, Bangalore
16. Dr. H.M. Mohammed Fajilla Sharif, Managing Director, KSPF, Bangalore
17. Mr. Prakash G, Director, Watershed Department, Bangalore
18. Mr. Shivkumar K, M.D. Karnataka Sheep and Wool Development Corp. Ltd. Bangalore
19. Mr. Umesh C. Bagur, General Manager, KAPPEC Ltd. Bangalore
20. Mr. Vishwanath P. Managing Director, HOPCOM Bangalore
21. Dr. Jayaprakash R. Joint Director of Horticulture, Department of Horticulture, B’lore
22. Mr. Lakshmi Narayana, M, Commissioner, Agri Marketing, Bangalore
23. Mr. Rajgopal N, Director, Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences
24. Mr. Nagaraj Shetty K, Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences
25. Mrs. Shabana, M Shekh, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture.
26. Mr. Summand Singh R.L., Assistant Director of Sericulture, Department of Sericulture
27. Mr. Raghunath G. AME Foundation
28. Dr. GNS Reddy, BAIF, Institute for Rural Development, Karnataka
29. Mr. Jaichaitany Das, ISKON, Bangalore
30. Mr. A.D. Nagappa, Chief Manager, Syndicate Bank, Bangalore
31. Mr. Sundar R, Chief General Manager, NABARD Bangalore
32. Dr. Chandrashekaraarapu S, Karnataka Certified Seed Producers Forum
33. Mr. S. Ravindra, Cauvery Seed Company Ltd
34. Mr. D. Sudhir Kumar, Regional Business Manager, Mahyco Seeds Ltd
35. Mr. Srivastava A.K., CEO, Chairman, Safal Fruits and Vegetable Auction Market B’lore.
36. Dr. V. Somasundara Rao, Namdhari Seeds Pvt Ltd, Bangalore
37. Mr. Erik Schmit, Metro Cash & Carry India Pvt Ltd, Bangalore
38. Mr. K. Monappa Karkera, Progressive Farmer, Mangalore
40. Mr. Abhay Tukaram Desai, Progressive Farmer, Belgaum.
41. Mr. Vivek Nayak, Ken Agritech, pvt, Ltd, Hubli.
42. Mr. Ganapathi R.Hebbar, Jagadale Exports Ltd Bangalore
43. Mr. D. R. Gopal, Monarch Hatcheries Pvt, Ltd, Bangalore
44. Mr. Nagabhushan H.N. Venkateshwar Hatcheries Ltd Bangalore
45. Mr. Srihari Reddy M, Lotus Farms Bangalore.
46. Mr. Chandra Mouli.M.R, Argi Business, Reliance Retail, Ltd
47. Mr. Girish B. Deshpande, NETAAM, Irrigation India Pvt ltd, Bangalore
48. Mr. Jayanna M.T. AIR, (Retired)
49. Mr. Mruthyunjay M.S, Sujay Irrigations Pvt, ltd, Bangalore
50. Mrs. Umadevi S. Assistant Director, Department of A.H. & V.S. Bangalore
51. Mr. Banda Kumar P.S, Karnataka Hatcheries Ltd., Bangalore.
52. Mr. Putannaiah, G.B., Nutri Feeds Forms Pvt ltd
53. Mr. Sarwate, Jain Irrigation Systems ltd, Bangalore
54. Mr. Shashikanth, Pioneer Plastic Zinc ltd, Bangalore
55. Mr. Tyagi A.K.R. Suguna Poultry forms ltd. Bangalore
56. Mr. GVG Rao, President, Golden Green Co. Ltd., Bangalore.