

An Overview of Mining Sectors in Karnataka, India

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Abstract: Karnataka is described as one of the mineral rich states of south India with vast mineral reserves, adding a significant position to Indian mining sector. Karnataka is known for the largest production of several minerals like gold, iron ore, feldspar, manganese, limestone etc. The mining industry in Karnataka has its origin dated back to Palaeozoic era. The present study focuses on different mining areas of Karnataka along with relevance on various mineral production districts of Karnataka.

Keywords: Karnataka, Mining, mineral ores, Indian economy

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I. Introduction:

Karnataka initially known as State of Mysore is a state with rich natural resources such as rivers, mountains, mines and ores, exotic flora and fauna. The state came into existence on 1st November 1956. It was renamed as Karnataka in 1973. Bengaluru is the largest and the capital city of Karnataka. It has an area of 191,976 sqkms and occupies 5.83% of the total topographical area of India, thus being the seventh largest Indian state by area. With respect to population, it is the eighth largest state in India with a total population of 61,130,704 as of 2011 census. Kannada is the official language which is also one among the classical languages of India. The word Karnataka is derived from two Kannada words “karu” and “nadu” meaning “elevated land”. Karu nadu may also be interpreted as “karu” meaning Black and nadu” meaning region in relevance to the black cotton soil found in the Bayalu-Seeme region of the state. Karnataka state is surrounded by Arabian Sea in the west, Goa in the northwest, Maharashtra in the north, Telangana in the north east, Andhra Pradesh in the east, TamilNadu in the southeast and Kerala in the southwest. ^[1] Coastal karavali region, hilly malenadu region inclusive of Western Ghats and Bayaluseeme region involving the plains of the Deccan plateau are the three primary geographical zones of Karnataka. Geologically the state is comprised of four main formations such as the Archean complex (made of Dharwad schists and granitic gneisses), the proterozoic non-fossiliferous sedimentary formations of the Kaladgi and Bhima series, the Deccan trappean and inter-trappean deposits and the most recent tertiary laterites. ^[2]

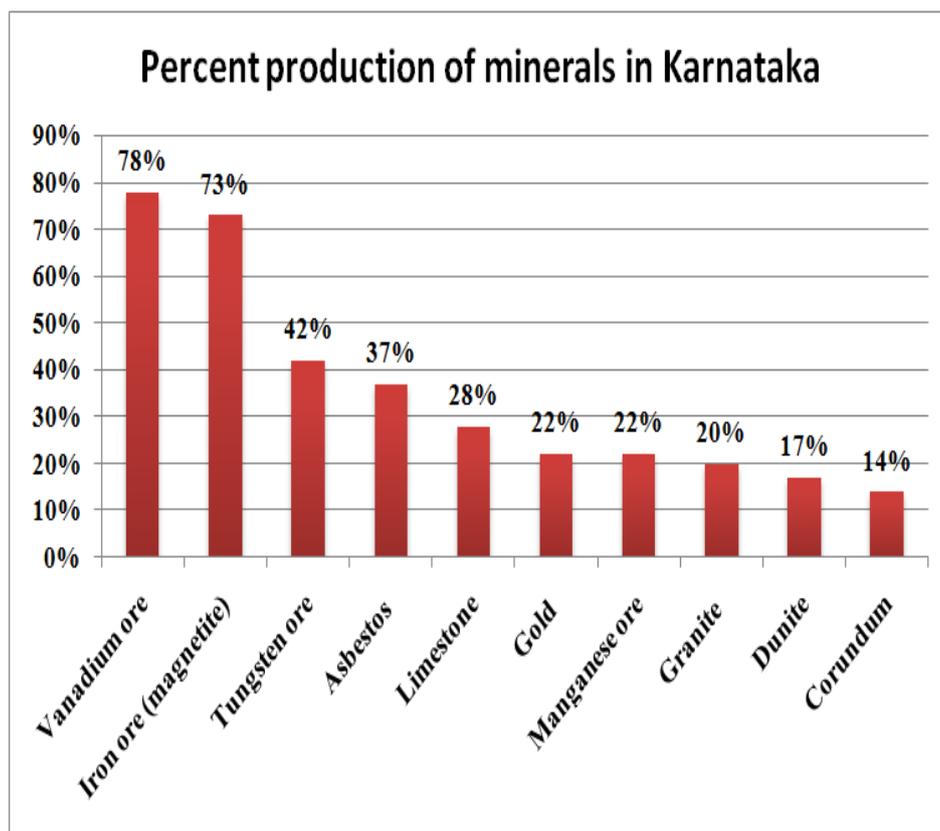


Figure -1 Source: probharat.com; mapsof.net

Karnataka state is the abode of prosperous deposits of metallic and non-metallic minerals. It has the oldest Geological Survey Departments of the nation, established almost way back in 1880 through which there is an abundant discovery of numerous mineral resources. Minerals of Karnataka include a wide array of large deposits encompassing millions of tonnes of ore to small scale occurrences. There is more even distribution of smaller deposits and are numerous found.^[9]

Mineral reserves were traced in Karnataka as early as Palaeolithic times as proved by discoveries of hand-axe and cleavers in the region. Proof of Neolithic and megalithic cultures have also been set up in the state. Karnataka and Indus valley civilization seem to have contacts from the evidence that gold found in Harappa was said to be imported from mines in Karnataka.^[7,3]

Karnataka contributes a vast mineral resource to the nation's overall reserves as indicated by the following graph:



Graph: 1 Source: GSI, 2014

Other than the above said minerals, Karnataka is also considered to have substantial resources of hematite, bauxite, chromite, dolomite, quartz and sand-silica besides different varieties of clay, fuller's earth, talc and steatite (soapstone).^[8]

Facts about minerals in Karnataka:

- Only state that produces felsite in India
- Leads national gold production (99 %) and Dumite production (43 %)
- More than 75 % of the state's mined area is occupied by just four minerals – iron ore, limestone, gold and manganese.

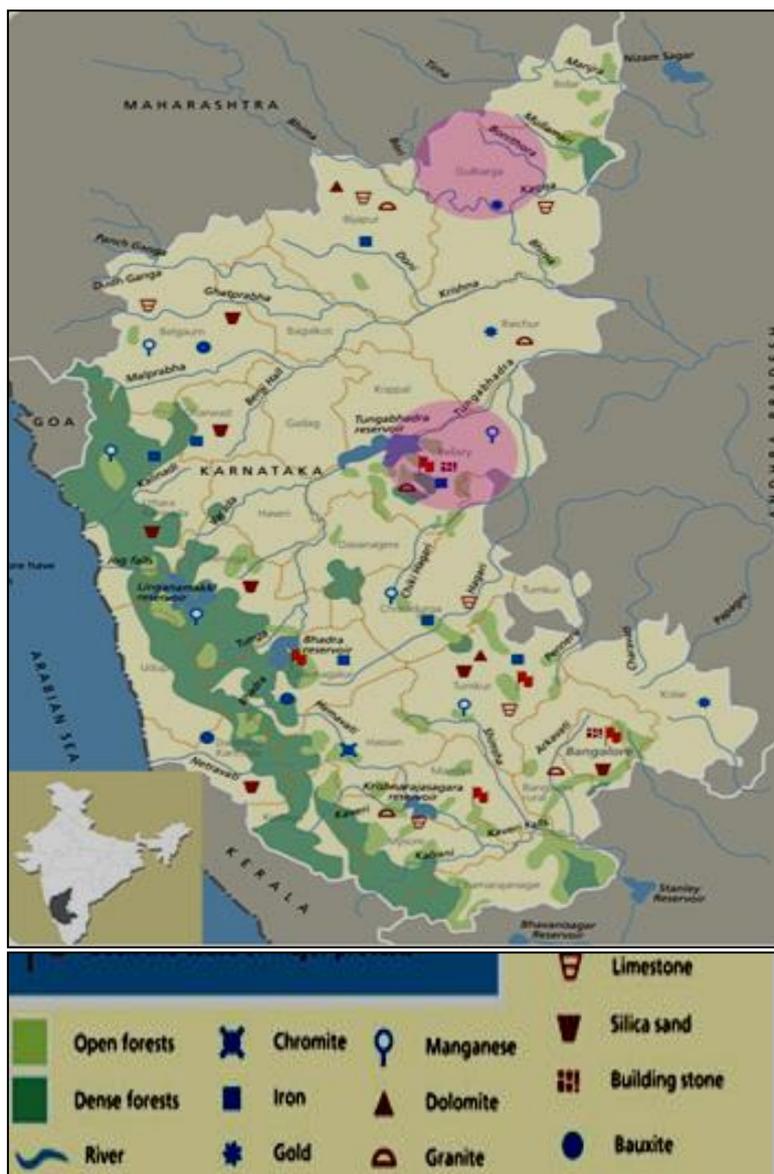


Figure:2 Minerals of Districts in Karnataka-- Source: cseindia.org

- The chief mining districts of Karnataka include Bellary (18 %), North Kanara and Kolar (11 %), Chitradurga (10 %) and Chikkamagaluru (9 %)
- Kollegal forests are known for dense forests, sandalwood and abundant black granite reserve, Western Ghats is famous for iron ore, Gulbarga for limestone and sand mining is popular in Tungabhadra.

Major and minor mineral production in various districts of Karnataka

Mineral	Average annual production (Million tonnes)	Districts
Gold	1.583(tons)	Raichur, Kolar
Iron ore (hematite and Magnetite)	18.7	Bellary, Chikkamagaluru, Chitradurga, Bijapur, Dharwad, Tumkur and Uttara Kannada.
Lime stone, lime shell and Dolomite	10.42	Gulbarga, Chitradurga, Belgaum, Bijapur and Tumkur.
Brick earth	1.55	Bangalore, Chitradurga, Tumkur and Kolar.
Manganese	0.25	Bellary, Shimoga, Uttara Kannada Chitradurga and Tumkur.
Magnasite	0.082	Mysore.
Building Stone	2.42	19 districts mainly in Bangalore, Tumkur, Bijapur, Bagalkot, Mysore and Raichur.
Ordinary sand	0.55	17 districts mainly in Belgaum, Dharwad, shimoga, U.Kannada . Tumkur and D.Kannada
Granite	5.51 million sq. ft	Bijapur and Gulbarga.
Laterite	0.46 lakh tons	Dakshina Kannada

Source: Administrative Reports (from 97-98 to 2000-01), DMG, GoK

II. Conclusion

Karnataka is a mineral state of the Indian subcontinent with vast mineral reserves and a huge production hub for various common and rare metals. Mining in Karnataka has always been the revenue generating system in the industrial sector next to agriculture.

Acknowledgements

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