Mohammad Ali was the most remarkable character in the modern history of the Turkish province. He is usually known as Mohammad Ali in the west Mehmet Ali Pasha as he would have called himself. He was born in 1769 in the Macedonian part of Kavalla. He was either an Albanian ancestry or the descendant of Turks long resident among Albanians. As part of the Ottoman Albania corps of the Ottoman army, he was sent to reclaim Egypt for the Ottoman Sultan from the French army. It was the year of 1805, when he was appointed as the Pasha of Egypt.

In the history of Egypt, Mohammad Ali is known for those major reforms which he brought during his rule. He served Egypt throughout his life with the aim to build it as a powerful country. Because of his progressive work, Mohammad Ali was known as the “father of modern Egypt.” He was a shrewd ruler who knew enough the supremacy of European arms, technical knowledge, and education. Even he invited the French to teach his followers and formed new army and navy with the latest weapons by bringing French naval and military experts to Egypt. Along with these changes he also opened various schools based on the model of France and also to make translation of French books into Arabic. He brought agricultural experts and by 1815 had monopolized trade in cotton, hemp and indigo. By the time of his death in 1849 Mohammad Ali had overhauled the administration and revitalized the
economy of Egypt. He created a hierarchy of officials who oversaw the collection of taxes, controlled irrigation, and maintained public order.

When Mohammad Ali inherited government in Egypt, it was probably in the worst condition of all the Ottoman provinces. The Mamluks had done nothing but oppress it. He said “when I came to Egypt it was really barbarous, utterly barbarous. Barbarous it remains to this day. Still I hope that my labors have rendered its condition somewhat better than it was. You must not however be shocked if you do not find in these countries the civilization which prevails in Europe.”

It was Mohammad Ali whose 43 years (1905-48) of rule produced extraordinary changes in Egypt. During his rule the village was became the unit of administration with its head- man the ‘Shaikh al- belad’, who was representing the ruler in every capacity. Again these villages were grouped in subdivisions, under the ‘Hakim al- Khut’, which were formed into sixty one districts, each under a ‘Mamur’. To maintain a moderate degree of honesty and justice, a close, active and perpetual supervision was needed. Later, he made all his chief officials swear to serve him honestly whose duty was to report any abuse of authority that came within their knowledge. He was well aware that punishment was necessary for any abuse. In 1830 through an twenty five officials of middle Egypt were to undergo for six months hard labour and in 1833 the mamurs were warned that they would be punished if they compelled the
sultans of government to till land within their jurisdiction. Another case was of 1836 when a village Sheik was ordered to be executed if he proved to be guilty of beating a man to death without provocation. The most important requisite and to check the misconduct of officials are the frequent inspection which was always done by Mohammad Ali. Often He went on tour enquiring with the utmost into the state of the accounts and the general administration and during such inspection he travelled without a guard.

Another important change brought by him was that he was not in the favour of the continuity of the Turks' superiority in administration because he did not trust on Turks very far. He sought as for as possible to replace them by Arabs. So, in 1826 no less than forty five young men, the sons of Arab Sheikhs and others, were sent to France to be educated there. Mohammad Ali had found that he could not prudently go too far in the employment of Arabs. The Turks, as a foreign observer said, "Always stole more decently then the Arabs".

Another most important characteristic of Mohammad Ali's rule was that he developed and enlarged the practice of discussing public business before proceeding to any action. In 1819 he set up a council or Diwan comprising of seven persons to manage and discuss transaction between the Treasury and European merchants. This system was applied to all departments of the central government and was more widely
extended in 1829. But these developments in administration were generally misconceived as philosophic Radicals and Saint Simonies claimed Mohammad Ali as a convert to Western democracy. And the one said that the pasha’s experiments were more tricks designed to impress European opinion, and others that they meant the establishment of representative government.

As for as his financial management was concerned, he get extraordinary success in this field. Onlookers were anticipating his financial ruin and declaring his wars and internal projects would ruin him as well as country. In 1827, when he was burdened with the cost of the war in the Morea at the moment that his resources were strained by two successive failures of the Nile to attain its usual height he still went on building factories, and constructing a mole and dockyard at Alexandria. In the matter of accountancy, Mohammad Ali Pasha was willing to learn and borrow from the European. It becomes clear when he sought advice in the matter of accountancy from Bowring when he visited Egypt in 1838. All the public accounts were produced for inspection before him. He made a number of recommendations for their improvement such as the introduction of a budget of receipts and expenditure of the beginning of each year, payment of all revenues into the central treasury, the complete separation of the power to receive and issue public money and
the establishment of the power in the Finance Minister to sanction or reject proposed expenditure etc.

Since Mohammad Ali’s development strategy was based on agriculture so he expanded the area under cultivation and planted crops specifically for export, such as long-staple cotton, rice, indigo, and sugarcane. The surplus income from agricultural production was used for public works, such as irrigation, canals, dams, and barrages, and to finance industrial development and the military. The development plans hinged on the state's gaining a monopoly over the country's agricultural resources. In practical terms, this meant the peasants were told what crops to plant, in what quantity, and over what area. The government bought directly from the peasants and sold directly to the buyer, cutting out the intermediaries or merchants.

Mohammad Ali was also committed to the industrial development of Egypt. For this purpose he set up modern factories for weaving cotton, jute, silk, and wool. Workers were drafted into factories to weave on government looms. Factories for sugar, indigo, glass, and tanning were set up with the assistance of foreign advisers and imported machinery. Industries employed about 4 percent of the population or between 180,000 and 200,000 persons fifteen years of age and over. The textile industry was protected by embargoes imposed by the government to prohibit the import of the cheap British textiles that had flooded the
Egyptian market. Commercial activities were geared toward the establishment of foreign trade monopolies and an attempt to acquire a favorable balance of trade.

In terms of education, Mohammad Ali’s policy may have started as part of his attempt to create a modern army and navy. Yet he always believed in her power of knowledge patronized the members of the educational missions which he sent abroad. On their return they shared their knowledge by translating books from European languages. It is narrated that he once “cut a geography book into three portions with his sword and put three men to work on translating it, because he had been told it would take three months to translate”. Until 1837 education was administrated by the War department but in that year a department of education was created with a president, three permanent and six consultant members, and a secretary. By 1840 two large preparatory school, one in Cairo and the other in Alexandria, and about fifty primary schools had been established throughout the country. In cooperation with other government departments, the council maintained also a number of specialist military and medical schools. Meanwhile, several students holding government scholarships were studying in Europe. The first of these missions had been sent in 1813 with fifteen students, following mainly military studies. By the end of Mohammad Ali’s reign (1849) eleven missions had been sent to England, Italy, France and the states.
Mohammad Ali continued to rule Egypt after his defeat in Syria. He became increasingly senile towards the end of his rule and his eldest son, Ibrahim, petitioned the Ottoman government to be appointed governor because of his father's inability to rule. Ibrahim was gravely ill of tuberculosis, however, and ruled for only five months, from July to November 1848 and Abbas takes over in December. Mohammad Ali died in August 1849.