CHAPTER - I

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History is a systematic study of man's past. It is more than a chronological account of names and dates; it seeks to understand how and why man has developed as he has. Over the centuries the scope of history has widened, and new areas are included in it. It is growing in its extent and content. History is becoming more and more the history of the people. Not only are the events and facts of history variously interpreted, but also its new dimension and facts are brought to light. One such aspect of history is the Administrative History of a country.

A new trend of writing history is to find out people's reaction and response to administrative systems and policies of the rulers. People's participation in the basic level of administration has attracted Historians. Boyce observed, 'In the process of time nations were formed by the expansion of basic communities, or by their fusion, or by their absorption into larger units'. It is the type and form of administration that reveals the levels of relationship between the ruler and the ruled. Local Self-Government had a pride of place in the scheme of administration during the ancient and medieval India.

3. James Bryce: Modern Democracies, New York, 1921, p. 130
In our own times Local Self-government has come to stay as the best training ground for citizenship and statesmanship. It is the combination of political devolution and decentralization. According to a modern writer, 'real freedom seems to imply, for the success of participatory democracy, the power to make decisions — real decisions — in the hands of the people whom the programmes are supposed to help.'

As a sort of definition, Local Self-Government may be said to involve the conception of a territorial, non-sovereign community possessing the legal right and the necessary organisation to regulate its own affairs. This, in turn, presupposes the existence of a Local authority with power to act independently of external control as well as the participation of the local community in the administration of its own affairs.

The term 'Local Self-Government,' generally means the 'administration of a locality — a village, a town or a city or any other area smaller than the State — by a body representing the local inhabitants, possessing a fairly large amount of autonomy, raising at least a part of its revenue through local taxation and spending its income on services which are regarded as local and therefore, distinct from the State and Central services.

When people begin to live together in a locality, communal living requires certain civic amenities like water-supply, drainage, sanitation, roads, markets and prevention of epidemics. With the increase in population expansion follows in other field like trade and commerce, education, public health and public works. The provision of these basic amenities becomes the added responsibility of the local government.

Local Self-government has essential attributes such as statutory status, power to raise finance by taxation in the locality, participation of the local community in decision making in specified subjects and their administration, freedom to act independently of central control and its general purpose character.8

The ideal of Local Self-Government is said to be:

1. Determination of local needs by the people of the locality or their representatives,
2. Supply of these needs by the local people, or
3. By an agency under their control.

If the people of a locality are free to determine the local needs of the people and are also free to supply these needs by raising the necessary funds for the purpose, then the people can be said to have had the ideal Local Self-Government.9 But it is common knowledge that the people nor free to supply all these.

The study of the evolution of the Local Self-Governments and their contribution to public life is a subject of absorbing value and interest, which needs to be studied in depth. The civic services that the people need have to be planned, programmed and integrated. Local Bodies perform duties of great variety and magnitude and relieve the State from much of its burden, both financial and administrative. It is a well-settled instrument of political education. Decentralized areas of administration facilitate better understanding between the people and the Government. It helps in mobilizing resources for development. In a democratic and socialist set up as in India, Local Self-government trains people to work with others and for others. A study of Local Self-government helps/avoid and rectify the mistakes and pit-falls in the system by learning from experience.

The scope of the present study in limited to the District of Anantapur, once described as a Ceded District, later forming part of the newly formed Madras Presidency at the dawn of the 19th Century. It is now a district in Rayalaseema in the modern Andhra Pradesh. The British system of administration made great strides and gained popularity there due to the efforts of the benevolent Principal Collector, Sir Thomas Munro.10

In the process of consolidation by the new rulers, the time-honoured local institutions of the pre-British days were superseded by an English system in which the District played a vital role. All local

bodies, whether corporation of the Metropolices or moffusil towns, or Local Boards in the urban and rural areas, were put into operation under the control of the Provisional Government. In the wider context of the administration of the Presidencies, districts assumed importance.

The large size of the Madras Presidency and its growing population influenced in no small measure the machinery of the Government, Central as well as Local. For the purpose of the new administration, the Presidency was divided into Districts.\textsuperscript{11} The District Officer had been primarily the field agent of the Government and has symbolised local administration in the District. Local Boards operated within the orbit of the Collectorate and the District Collector exercised overwhelming powers over them.

The District of Anantapur is the home of a rich cultural and historical heritage not only since the pre-historic times, but also during the heydays of the most magnificent Vijayanagara era. Many Decan dynasties that proceeded it, continued the administrative system for long. There were good traditions of Local Government in ancient and medieval times till the coming of the British and more so till this area came under the watchful eyes of Sir Thomas Munro.\textsuperscript{12}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} In 1919 the total number of districts in the Madras Presidency was 25. See: K.K. Pillai : History of Local Self-Government in the Madras Presidency 1859-1919 Op. cit. p. 11.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Noboru Karashima : South Indian History and Society, from Inscriptions 850-1800 A.D., O.U.P., 1984, p.1.
\end{itemize}
The present study is an attempt to highlight the development of the various facts and phases of Local Self-government in the Anantapur District with special emphasis on the origin and growth of Local Bodies between 1882 and 1920. Even though Anantapur had a Municipality since 1869, Municipal administration is not within the purview of this study. Only the Local Bodies that were created by the Local Boards and Unions (Panchayats) will be dealt with.

This study has become significant because works on Local Self-government in the rural and semi-urban areas have not been widely undertaken. There is a feeling among some whether Local Bodies are doing any useful work with efficiency or whether they are a 'wasteful burden waiting to be abolished. Since the days of the 'Father of the Nation', 'the Gramarajya' ideal has captured the imagination of the people. The battle cry of 'Panchayatraj' is renting the air once again. Democracy cannot be realised as a human and political ideal unless there is active and willing participation by the citizens in the process of the Government. From this angle, a study of peoples' behaviour vis-a-vis the local institutions in desirable. 13

The time frame of this study is necessarily restricted to a short period of about four decades from 1882 to 1920. This restriction had to be imposed for various desirable reasons. For one timing, the massive nature of source materials in the form of Government records, reports, despatches, resolutions and statistics and the availability of

a large number of published works leaves the researcher with no choice but to bring the period of investigation to a manageable limit.

The restriction in period 1882 to 1920 is imposed for many other reasons as well. First of all, these forty years constitute the most fertile years in the growth of Local Self-government in India generally and the Madras Presidency in particular. Momentous changes took place in this field leading to effective decentralization and more broad-based democratization of the process of Local Self-government.

Secondly, this was the historic era when the whole nation was in a ferment. Events of spectacular significance were happening in the national scenario. The forces of national resurgence, liberalism, social change and economic growth were sweeping the country like an avalanche. Along with the epic struggle for national freedom and the constitutional changes, India was witnessing great strides in the evolution of Local Self-government.

These changes were unmistakably visible in the Rayalaseema and Anantapur. Foundations of a good and efficient Government had been laid in this region ever since the early 19th Century. Law and Order had been restored and the rebellious oligars quelled. The atmosphere for peace and orderly Government was congenial at Anantapur which was waiting for the experiment of the Local Self-government to take roots in the soil.

In 1882, Anantapur had become an independent district. The Local Boards Act of 1884 based on the historic Resolution of Ripon in 1882, enabled Anantapur to have a District Board in 1885, the Taluk Boards in
1886 and the Union Boards at the same time. The culminating point of the study, namely, the year 1920 heralded a new era in the evolution of the Local Self-government. Incidentally, it also marked the dawn of the Gandhian era in the struggle for freedom at the national stage and the inauguration of the 'Justice, Rule' in the Madras Presidency.  

In the interval between these two milestones of national and local changes, Anantapur participated in such exciting events like the Home Rule and the Khilafat movements and later in the Satyagraha. There was an absolute harmony and amity between the various communities and castes in the region. Leaders of eminence such as Gooty Kesava Pillai, Kallur Subba Rao and Pappur Ramacharlu, to mention a few, were taking part in the process of national awakening. Silently and effectively the foundations of Local Self-government were being laid in the District. The fact that the reality of Local Self-government was one of the strong forces shaping the future cannot be disputed.

In the light of the foregoing changes this study in turn raises a set of questions in relation to the evolution of Local Self-government represented by Local Boards in the Anantapur District.

1. What was the extent and nature of the local response to the challenges of the Local Boards?
2. Did the Local Boards display local initiative, independence of action and efficiency of performance?

3. What was the contribution of the Local Boards to the public life and welfare?

4. Was there real participatory democracy in the Local Boards as reflected in the representation to all interests and segments?

5. What were the defects and draw-backs in the systems which tried to strangulate the Local Boards?

6. Did the experiment of Local Self-Government succeed in the Anantapur District?

The study aims at finding answers to the above questions in the light of available evidence. This inquiry is not just an analysis of the changing patterns of Local Self-government in the Anantapur District studied as an isolated reality. Rather, it is an attempt to examine the responses of the people of the locality, traditionally poor and backward, despite possessing the rudiments of local government through traditions for ages, to the far-reaching political and administrative demands made upon them.

Fortunately, the subject seems to have attracted a few scholars of repute. A good number of pioneering works have been made in the field of Local Self-government in modern India. Some of them are of a general nature, while a few of them trace its development in particular Provinces and districts in India.

To mention the most important among them


5. R. Agral : *Municipal Government in India* (1960),


12. M. Venkatarangaiya : *The Development of Local Boards in the Madras Presidency* (1938),

13. V. Venkata Rao : *The Administration of District Boards in Madras Presidency* (1953),

The above works have dealt in detail with the development of Local Self-government at the national, regional and district levels. Yet, no study of this nature has been undertaken with regard to the Rayalaseema region or the Anantapur District. That way the present work becomes a subject of considerable importance and relevance in terms of local study of an under-developed region. Hopefully it may stimulate further research in the field of District History.

For a scientific study of the problems under review a reference to the most important sources of information is necessary. The main source materials are vast and varied not only in their content but also in their locations. The important primary sources for the study are the innumerable Government records. The spectrum of official records include Annual reports of the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1882-1920, Annual Reports on the Moral and Material progress and conditions of the people of India 1881-1920, Annual Reports of the Local and Municipal Department - District Municipalities 1882-1920, Census Reports, Commission Reports, Manual of Madras Administration, Reports of Indian Finance Commission, Statistical Volumes, Collectorate Records, District Gazetteers, Legislative Council Debates, Despatches and Resolutions, Statute Books etc.

Secondary authorities comprise of published books, articles in journals Newspaper reports, unpublished doctoral dissertations all
pertaining to the subject under discussion. Most of the sources are found in the State Archives of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad and Tamil Nadu Archives, Madras, Collector's Office, Anantapur, Zilla Parishad Office, Anantapur, Public Libraries like Connermara Library, Madras. The British Council Library, Madras, Hyderabad and Anantapur Libraries and the University Libraries at Hyderabad and Anantapur.

The methodology followed in this work is descriptive narration of the development of Local Self-Government in Anantapur District with special reference to the role of the Local Boards. The period of thirty-eight years is divided into two phases, namely (1) 1882-1900 and (2) 1900-1920 and the main stages of the evolution of Local Boards, their contributions and problems are traced.

The study is arranged in seven chapters. The First Chapter discusses the objectives and scope of the subject. The Second sketches in brief the historical background and the perspectives of the administration of the region. The Third Chapter treats in relief the history of the district in the backdrop of the Madras Presidency of which it was a vital part. Chapter Four deals with the organisation and structural patterns of the Local Boards in the District whose frontiers changed according to the needs and circumstances. Chapter Five pertains to the various public services provided by the Local Boards, the problems and prospects of such services. Chapter six outlines the financial aspects of the Local Boards, the constraints and the efforts at raising resources and expending them according to budgetary allocations. Chapter Seven draws attention to the nature and extent of the Provincial and Central Government controls on the working
of the Local Boards and the consequences of such inter-Governmental interactions.

The overall view and evaluation in conclusion will assess the achievements and failures of the experiment of the Local Boards and analyse the causes and assess the performances; the emergence of local leadership and the inter-relations between the Independence Movement and the Local Self-Government Movement is another important facet of this period of transition. Being a first attempt of an entirely new field of investigation, the scholar is faced with a few problems of methodology and lack of the tools of a trained, professional and scientific historian. The field of Local History, particularly the administrative history at the district level, is a new field for researchers. The 'Land of the Rayas' or the Rayalaseema with its historic past and cultural heritage can prove to be a virgin soil for modern historical research at the micro level.