CHAPTER - IV

Organizational Frame - Work of the Local Boards
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ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE LOCAL BOARDS

Local Boards constitute the vital rural and semi-urban sections in the domain of local self-government. The territorial jurisdiction of a Local Board extends to a wider area of a Taluk or a District as recognised by the Land Revenue Code. The Category of a Local Board includes a District Board, Taluk Boards and Union (Panchayat) Boards. The functions of the Local Board are to be performed in rural areas. This aspect has special significance in a country of villages like India.¹

A reference to the organisational set up and powers of the Local Boards is important to understand their role in Local Self-government. The Constitutional development of Local Board in Anantapur District has an interesting history. The origin of constituting authorities to administer local taxes began when the Education Rate of 1863 and the Road cess of 1866 were levied by the Government of the Madras Presidency.²

This was the first occasion when the Government recognised the need for obtaining the co-operation of the people of the locality in administrative matters. This also marks a departure from the system under which the government officials were regarded as the only proper

persons for being entrusted with power and responsibility. Thus, the desirability of selecting non-official residents to administer local taxes was gaining prominence by the 1870s.

At the same time it was felt that the local authority should not be wholly composed of non-officials. Expert help became necessary in the planning and execution of Public Services and such assistance could best be rendered by officials of the several administrative departments. Moreover, the Government did not have confidence about the Local Self-government being successfully conducted by the people themselves. It was also rather difficult to find a large number of non-officials with the required ability and public spirit. Hence the only practical course was a compromise between a purely official authority and a purely non-official one.

It should be noted also that distinction was made from the beginning between the deliberative and executive work of the local bodies. It was imperative to appoint officials alone as the executive officers of the local boards. The next question was regarding the modalities of selecting non-official members of the local boards. The days of the principle of election had not yet dawned. That being so, nominating respectable and influential non-officials to the local boards was the best alternative.

3. ibid., p.40
4. ibid., p.42
5. The Local Funds Act of 1871 - Section 3
The Local Funds Board Act of 1871 provided for the constitution of a Local Board in each 'Circle'. The Collector of the District, as ex-officio and a certain number of non-officials and officials, to be nominated by the Governor-in-Council, were to be the members of this Board. The general rule regarding the ratio between official and non-official members was that the number of non-official should not be less than three or less than fifty percent of the total strength. The non-officials nominated were to be owners or occupiers of land in the 'Circle', or persons carrying on business there at or residing in it. The Collector of the district was to be the President of the Circle Board and the entire execution power was vested in him. The Governor-in-Council was empowered to appoint one of the members of the Board to be its Vice-President.

Accordingly, the Anantpur Circle Board considered of forty members, nineteen officials and twenty one non-officials. However, the system of nomination failed to bring into the Boards popular representatives capable of looking at questions with courage and independence. Consequently there was a forceful argument in favour of election of the members to the Board.

6. *ibid.*, Sections 4 and 5.
7. *ibid.*, Section 23.
The Local Boards Act of 1884 set up three grades of Local authorities namely, the District Boards, the Taluk Boards and the Union Panchayats. The number of members was to be not less than 24 comprising party of officials and non-officials. It was laid down that the number of officials should not be more than one fourth of the total strength of the Board wherever the members were nominated by the Governor-in-Council. In the case of the elected members no proportion was fixed by statute. But, it is not clear if the officials could directly contest for election or they were selected (and so, elected) by the non-officials.10

Every Revenue Officer in charge of a Division of the district was an ex-officio member of the District Board. Regarding the appointment of the remaining members, the Act laid down that they be wholly nominated by the Governor-in-Council, or partly nominated and partly elected. Members of the Taluk Boards, Panchayats, Tax-payers and other inhabitants of any part of the district having no Taluk Boards elected the members. 11

The executive authority of the District Board was vested in the President, who was generally the Collector of the District. However, the Governor-in-Council could permit the Board to elect a President from among the members. Every Board also had a Vice-President, either

10. Local Boards Act V of 1884., Section 16.
nominated by the Governor-in-Council or elected with his permission by
the Board from among the members. 12

The Anantapur District Board was constituted in 1885 with 24
members six of whom were officials and the rest non-officials. All the
members were initially appointed by the Government. Their term of
office was three years. The President was the Collector of the
District Mr. Cruickshank and the Vice-President was Mr. M. Sami Row.
The other official members represented the various departments of the
District. The non-official members were all natives of the District,
representing the Taluks. 13

The District Board met twelve times in 1885-86 and the average
attendance of officials and non-officials was 2.6 and 6.7
respectively. 14 In the consecutive year also the attendance of the
non-officials in the District Board meetings was encouraging. A
Government order laid down that one half of the total number of members
would be eventually elected by the Taluk Boards as against Government
nomination in the previous years. 15 Curiously enough the Annual Report
of the Board noted that Mr. B. Narasimhachariyar the non-official

12. M. VENKATARANGAIYA: The Development of the Local Boards in the
13. Proceedings of the Madras Government, Local funds (Finance)
G.O.No.930, dated the 23.10.1885.
14. ibid., G.O.No. 1251 dated the 2.10.1886
15. Proceedings of the Madras Government, Local and Municipal
Department G.O.No.1962 dated the 28.1.1887.
member from Anantapur Taluk failed to attend a single meeting of the Board that year while the others attended regularly.\textsuperscript{16}

The Anantapur District Board members were warned in 1889 against having direct or indirect links with contract works under the respective local Boards. This was a sequel to allegations of irregularity in such matters published in a newspaper.\textsuperscript{17} In 1889 the name of Anantapur came to be transliterated and written as Anantapuramu.\textsuperscript{18} Rao Bahadur A. Sabhapati Mudaliar was recommended as a candidate representing Anantapur Local Boards for nomination to the Madras Legislative Council in 1893. That year the total membership of the Board was only 20. The Board had some distinguished citizens of the District in it as members.\textsuperscript{19}

The District Board of Anantapur undertook famine relief work in 1896. In the same year there was a plea from the community of Mohammedan priests to appoint a Muslim member from Madakasira to the District Board. The Brahmin members of the Penukonda Taluk Board were alleged to have opposed this nomination.\textsuperscript{20} Yet, the Muslim was

\textsuperscript{16} Administration Report of Anantapur District Board, Local and Municipal Department G.O.No.2066 dated 31.10.1887.

\textsuperscript{17} Proceedings of the Madras Government, Local and Municipal Department, G.O.No. 575, dated 10.7.1888. See also VIJAYADHWAJA (Kannada Journal) dated 17.5.1888.

\textsuperscript{18} ibid., G.O.No. 7222, dated 5.4.1889.

\textsuperscript{19} Among the District Board members of Anantapur, were Hanumantha Row, Zilla Dasana, K. Bhaskarappa and Vedajee Row. ibid., G.O.No.2129, dated 26.9.1893.

\textsuperscript{20} The name of the member in question was Mr. Syed Mohamed Sahib, Palladar and member of Temple Committee. ibid., G.O.No. 1898L dated 27.6.1896.
nominated. The Local Boards Act of 1898 provided for the nomination of a non-official member of the Local Board as its President. To give effect to this change, the election of a member from Penukonda to the District Board of Anantapur was confirmed by the President in his own right.  

PERIOD BETWEEN 1900 AND 1920

In 1900 there were 21 members of the Anantapur District Board as against the sanctioned strength of 24, of which three were ex-officio, eight nominated and ten elected members. The elective seats of the Board were distributed among the Taluk Boards. The Anantapur District Board utilised its revenue for starting new works and maintaining communications, education, medical services and sanitation.

The Constitution of the Anantapur District Board remained unaltered in the early years of the present century. In 1902 Anantapur District Board had the distinction of obtaining the full proportion of elected members. The President of the District Board was also declared to be a member of the respect Board over which he presided. It was also decided to raise the strength of the Board to twenty five.

24. Proceedings of the Madras Government, Local and Municipal Department, G.O.No. 582L (Mis) dated 6.5.1903.
The election procedure in case of the elected segment of the District Board was simplified. Any member willing to be elected has only to be proposed and seconded by other members and the election could be conducted by the President by ballots. The candidate getting the largest number of votes would be duly elected. In case of a tie, the President shall have a second or a casting vote. Travelling allowance to the Vice-President of the District Board was sanctioned whenever he visited a place for a specific official purpose.

The Administration Report of the Board for the year 1905-06 states that though in some aspects the administration of the Board registered an advance, it could not be considered altogether satisfactory. The District Board deferred the reappointment of a medical subordinate in the employ of a Local Board to a seat in the Taluk Board on the objection raised by the Chairman of the Hospital Committee. In 1908 the power of nominating members to Taluk Boards was transferred from Government to the President of the District Board. But since non-officials were not selected as District Board presidents till 1914, this gesture was not immediately of any practical value. In 1909 one third of the members of each Taluk Board was allowed to be elected. Since then the District and Taluk Boards began to have elected majorities.

25. ibid., G.O.No. 632L dated 21.5.1903.
27. ibid., G.O.No. 9622, dated 14.8.1906
28. ibid., G.O.No. 98 (leg) dated 30.11.1906.
From April 1911, the number of members to be appointed for the District Board of Anatapur was fixed at 32. The proportion of such members to be appointed by election continued to be one half. The District Board presidents had to fix dates for elections of Taluk Boards by its members. A Government order of 1912 stipulated that any vacancy of the Vice-President of the District Board should be filled in by a suitable non-official member only. Meeting notices were issued both in English and in the language of the District. A Government order of 1915 authorised the President of the District Board to sanction proposals to close burial or burning grounds which had been in existence for long but without any owner to control them.

In 1916 all Presidents of the District Boards were requested to send up proposals regarding the feasibility of constituting new Panchayat Unions in villages with a population of 3000 and upwards. In view of the extension of the elective system the Presidents of the District Boards were informed of the proposal to classify Unions of less than 8000 population as Major Unions and the rest as Minor Unions. It was proposed to grant franchise to every person in the Unions paying a house tax. The District Board Presidents were instructed to formulate instructions in this regard for the guidance of Revenue Divisional Offices, Presidents of Taluk Boards and Chairmen of Union Panchayats.

32. ibid., G.O.No. 4892, dated 29.3.1916.
33. ibid., G.O.No. 1214, dated 7.9.1911.
The Government Resolution of 1918 desired substantial elected majorities in all the local bodies and to restrict the system of nomination except in the case of accommodating minority representation.\(^{34}\) It was also recommended to include a few experts without the right to vote in the District Boards, to extend the franchise to be sufficiently representative of the general body of the rate-payers, the Chairman of Unions to be non-officials, preferably elected and the ordinary executive work to be entrusted to the Special Officer appointed for the purpose.\(^{35}\)

A severe epidemic of plague ravaged the Anantapur District contributing to the diminution of interest by the District Board Members.\(^{36}\) In 1918 the Government approved the proposal of the Anantapur District Board to increase the maximum strength of the Board from 32 to 36 of which 24 would be elected members.\(^{37}\) The Administration Report of the Anantapur District Board for 1919 records that the elective seats on the District Board was raised from 16 to 24 and the full proportion of two third strength was made elective in all the Taluk Boards of the District. A non-official Vice-President was appointed for the District Board.\(^{38}\)


\(^{35}\) M. Venkatanarayana: *The Development of Local Boards in the Madras Presidency* of cit. p61.


The Madras Local Boards Act of 1920 took real steps not only in non-officialising the Local Boards, but also in constituting them on a substantial elective basis. The Official block was completely removed. The Collector and the Revenue Divisional Officers ceased to be ex-officio members of the local Boards. Government Officials with the exception of the village headmen were debarred from contesting for election. Furthermore, the elective principle won a substantial success. The actual proportion of elective members was hereafter to be determined by the Boards themselves. The Provincial Government retained only the power to nominate members to the District Boards.

When local Self-government was made a Transferred Subject under Dyarchy, the power of nomination also was transferred to the Ministers. Non-Officials alone could be Presidents of the District Boards. The Governor-in-Council reserved the discretion to nominate a non-official President or permit the District Boards to elect their own Presidents. The Act of 1920 came into operation from 1st April 1921. In the Anantapur District Board the number of elected members was raised from 24 to 28. The number nominated members decreased from 12 to 8. The President was a nominated non-official as there was no direct election to the District Board. A Government Order invited the attention of the Presidents of District and Taluk Boards to the need of

40. ibid., Section 9, clause 4
42. Proceedings of the Madras Government. Local and Municipal Department. G.O. No. 4982, dated 22.5.1921.
securing on the local Bodies equitable representation of the Depressed and Backward Classes.43

TALUK BOARDS IN ANANTAPUR DISTRICT 1884–1920

The Constitution of the Taluk Boards according to the Local Boards Act of 1884 was based more or less on the same lines as that of the District Board. It was to consist of a minimum strength of twelve members, partly official and partly non-official, the proportion being one third and two thirds. All the members could be either nominated in total or partly nominated and partly elected.44

Wherever election was permitted, the electorate consisted of members of the Panchayats in the taluk, or the tax-payers and the inhabitants of the taluk. All Revenue Divisional Officers were ex-officio members of the Taluk Boards in their area. The Divisional Officer was also the ex-officio President of the Taluk Board, but there was a provision for the President to be elected by the Board or nominated by the Governor.45 The Vice-President also might be either nominated or elected. However, down to 1919, all were appointed by the Government. Virtually, they were nominees of the District Collector.

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43. Only in five districts were the Panchamas represented on the Local Boards. The total number of such representation was only nine and out of 389 Union Panchayats only five had a panchama on it. G.O.No.5802 dated 15.6.1920.


Taluk Boards in Anantapur were formed for each Taluk or a group of taluks with a President and not less than twelve members, partly appointed and partly elected by the members of the Union Panchayat Boards or by the tax-payers themselves. Their term of office was three years. The jurisdiction of these Boards coincided with that of the Revenue Divisional Officers who were made ex-officio members and Presidents of these Boards. The Taluk Boards of Anantapur were formed in 1886.48

The Taluk Boards of Anantapur came to be established in 1886 as a consequence. These Boards were set up at Anantapur, Penukonda and Gooty. The jurisdiction of the Anantapur Taluk Board spread over Anantapur taluk, while that of Penukonda spread over the taluks of Penukonda, Hindu Madakasira and Dharmavaram Gooty and taluks came under the jurisdiction of Gooty Taluk Board. Each of these Taluk Boards had a maximum of Twelve members.47 Till the year 1920 their history covers the jurisdiction of Taluk Boards, an increase in the quantum of elected representatives and the creation of more unions. There was little change in the functions of these Boards.48

In 1893 the number of Taluk Boards in the Anantapur District was four with a total sanctioned strength of 48 of which 16 were officials.


47. of: Schedule in the Appendix attached to G.O.No.930. (Local Fund - Finance, dated 23.10.1886)

and 32 non-officials. During 1895-96 the Taluk Boards of Penukonda and Anantapur were reconstituted, the former with Penukonda, Hindupur, Madakasira and Dharmavaram Taluks and the latter with Ananatapur and the newly formed Kalyandrug taluk.

The attendance in the Taluk Boards meetings is said to have been sixty percent for the year 1896. The total strength of the Taluk Boards in 1899 was 38 of whom 10 were officials and 28 non-officials, of the total of 40 meetings none was postponed due to lack of quorum. The work of the School Committee was found to be wanting though the Dispensary Committee faired well. The Taluk Boards had a total of 30 members in 1900. In 1901 - attendance in Board meetings was meagre due to the prevalence of cholera in the District. The watersystem in the Gooty Taluk Board was not working well due to lack of interest by members.

In 1910 the strength of the Anantapur and Gooty Taluk Boards was raised from 12 to 15. Mr. P. Kesava Pillai was elected as the Vice-President of the Gooty Taluk Board. As a result of the addition of Kadiri Taluk to Anantapur District in 1911, the Taluk Boards were regrouped and the number was raised to four in the place of the

49. The new addition was the Kalyandrug Taluk Board. Proceeding of the Madras Government, Local and Municipal Department G.O.No.
52. ibid., G.O.No. 984L dated 25.8.1910.
53. ibid., G.O.No. 1095L dated 5.9.1910.
existing three Boards.\textsuperscript{54} Mr. KESAVA PILLAI moved a resolution in the Madras Legislature Council to introduce the elective system in the Local Bodies. Consequently, the number of elective seats to the four Taluk Boards was specified. In 1912 the new Taluk Board of Dharmavaram was created with a maximum strength of 15 members.\textsuperscript{55} The strength of the members of the Penukonda Taluk Board was raised from 15 to 17. The attendance in Gooty and Dharmavaram Taluk Boards was reported to be poor and non-officials members were particularly indifferent.\textsuperscript{58}

A non-official member was appointed as the President of the Anantapur Taluk Board for the first time in 1914. In 1917 certain alterations in the election rules of Taluk Boards were made simplifying the procedure. The Taluk Boards and District Board favoured allowing single Unions or groups to elect members to the Taluk Boards in 1918.\textsuperscript{57} Regarding the proposal to appoint Special Executive Officers, the Anantapur Taluk Board opined that the Taluk Board was entirely in the hands of the non-officials and was managed successfully.\textsuperscript{58}

In 1919 two thirds of the strength of the Taluk Boards in Anantapur was made elective. In the same year non-official Presidents

\textsuperscript{54} The Taluk Board were located at Gooty Anantapur, Penukonda and Dharmavaram G.O.No. 980L dated 26.7.1911.

\textsuperscript{55} Proceedings of the Madras Government, Local and Municipal Department G.O. No. 1688L dated 9.11.1912.

\textsuperscript{56} ibid., G.O.No.1456L dated 9.9.1913.

\textsuperscript{57} ibid., G.O.NO. 64L dated 15.1.1918.

\textsuperscript{58} ibid., G.O.No. 1510L dated 8.11.1918.
were appointed to the Gooty and Penukonda Taluk Boards.\textsuperscript{59} In 1920 the Anantapur Taluk Board was given the right of electing its President \textsuperscript{60} and the strength of the Gooty Taluk Board was raised from 15 to 24, to make provision for the representations of minorities and Depressed classes.\textsuperscript{61} According to Local Boards Act of 1920, the maximum strength of Taluk Boards was raised to 24. The Presidents of the Taluk Boards became ex-officio members of the District Board. The reconstituted Taluk Boards came into being in 1922 and there were four Taluk Boards most of them having elected Presidents.\textsuperscript{62}

\textbf{UNION PANCHAYATS IN ANANTAPUR 1884-1920}

The Act of 1884 advocated the revival of the Sabha system of ancient India village which trained the people in the art of Self-Government. The Government favoured the forming of a large number of Unions. But their progress was slow and after a certain stage it was completely arrested. There were 54,000 villages in the Presidency and the fact that only 400 Unions were formed clearly indicates that even the fringe of the problem had not been touched.\textsuperscript{63} In 1915 it was recommended to form village Panchayats in selected areas with only

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{59} The Administration Report of the Local Boards in Anantapur for 1919, G.O.No. 1162 L dated 26.9.1919.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Proceedings of the Madras Government Local and Municipal Department G.O.No. 1162L dated 26.9.1919.
\item \textsuperscript{61} ibid., G.O.No.1165L dated 16.11.1920.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Bh. Sivasankaranarayana (ed): The Anantapur District Gazetteer op.cit. pp 594-95.
\item \textsuperscript{63} M. Venkatarangaiya, The Development of Local Boards in the Madras Presidency, op.cit., pp 11-13.
\end{itemize}
permissive powers and limited authority in matters of taxation. A single Panchayat in each such selected village was favoured.  

The District authorities were asked to organise Unions in villages having a population of more than three thousand and informal Panchayats in selected villages with a population of three thousand and less. This scheme did not meet with success. The Village Panchayat Act of 1920 enabled the inhabitants of any village to have a Panchayat constituted in the village exercising statutory powers in all matters subject to the various restrictions of the officials and the District Boards. The Panchayats progressed slowly.

Union Boards in Anantapur District started to function since October 1886. Nine Union were formed then. By 1889 the total number of Unions rose to eleven. According to the rules of 1885, the electorate of the Union Panchayats consisted of residents in the Unions above twenty-five years of age who paid a house tax of five rupees or land revenue of ten rupees. The Union Panchayat was to consist of a minimum five members of whom the village headman was an ex-officio member. The other members were to be either wholly nominated by

64. ibid., Page 11.
65. ibid., Page 12-13
66. ibid., Page 14
67. ibid., Page 15 to 19
69. ibid., p.82.
70. The Local Boards Act of 1884, Section 119.
Government or partly nominated and partly elected by the tax-payers of the Union. The Chairman could be nominated by the Government or elected by the Panchayats wherever authorised. 71

In 1893 there were eleven Unions in Anantapur District with a total strength of 107 members, 46 ex-officio, 8 other officials and 53 non-officials, Their main duty was to attend to the sanitation work of the villages under their control and the upkeep of roads. The 'ward system' had not yet been introduced. 72 Till the end of the decade there was no change in the number of Unions which stood at eleven. 1899 the 'ward system' came into force. It did not function satisfactorily for want of interest by the members. 73 Attendance in the Union Bard meetings was unsatisfactory and their members were admonished. 74 Seven hamlets were excluded from Bukkapatnam, Dharmavaram, Hindupur and Madakasira Unions due to their distance from the Centre. 75

It is found from records that in the year 1903 once-a-month Union meetings could not be held for want of subjects. In 1905 - 06 the strength of Kalyandrug Union was reduced from 12 to 10. Between 1906 and 1910 Annual Reports of Local Boards record that many Unions were

71. ibid., Section 123.
73. Annual Report of the Administration of Local Boards in Anantapur 1899-1900.
75. ibid., G.O.No.984, dated 25.8.1902.
not working satisfactorily. The system of election was introduced into the Unions since 1911. The strength of Penukonda Union was raised from 15 to 17 and that of Pamidi was reduced from 12 to 10. In 1916 Guntakal and Timmancherla were constituted into a single union. Gooty and Hindupur Panchayats were authorised to appoint their Chairmen by election. Amarapuram was made into the Union with 11 members.

A special Government order in 1916 introduced the constitution of Major Panchayats in Unions with a population of not less than 8000 and all other unions were to be called Minor Panchayats. All seats in the Major Unions would be open to election on the basis of wards. Qualification needed for a voter was to be registered in the tax-payers register of the Union as the owner or occupier of a house or a resident of the Union for a period of 120 days in the aggregate in the proceeding financial year and should have paid all taxes to the Union. Candidates for election should not be salaried Government officers, or an insolvent, or a dismissed Government servant. In 1918 Konakondla, Singanamala and Yellanur became Unions followed by Beluguppa in 1919. In 1919 there were 18 Unions of which 9 were Major Union. The maximum strength of the Union Boards in 1920 was 15 and the minimum 7.

76. ibid., dated 5.9.1910, G.O.No.1095.
77. ibid., G.O.No. 1495L dated 26.10.1916.
78. ibid., G.O.No. 1214L dated 7.9.1916.
79. Kadri, Hindupur, Jadpatri, Kukkapatnam, Penukonda, Uravakonda and Gooty became Major Panchayats.
Prior to the passing of the Local Boards Act of 1884, the Local Boards had members appointed by the Government in a large measure. Even the element of election after 1884 was indirect in nature and undemocratic. The proportion of the elected members was not increased for a long time. In Taluk Boards down to 1909 all the members were Government nominees, who represented the District Collector. More slow and halting was the adoption of election in the Union Panchayats. It was in 1918 that the Panchayats were chosen by election.

Because of the lack of education and the backwardness of the rural population there was an obvious absence of public spirit. Custom and traditions, caste prejudices, factions and feuds were prevalent in the villages. Numerous Panchayats had to be abolished for lack of enthusiasm and misconduct of members the proportion of elected members in all local bodies was much less than the official sector, because suitable candidates were not available. Elections frequently went uncontested. Voters were indifferent to elections.

Since the areas of jurisdiction of the Union were restricted and the inhabitants therein were quite familiar with each other, response to elections was woefully unsatisfactory. The members of the Local Boards were not always men of outstanding ability or experience.

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81. Local Boards Report 1918 - p.3
83. Local Boards Report 1894-95 p.2
Sincerity and dedication were wanting. Membership of a local body was considered a matter of more honour than an opportunity for service. The official block always supported the government and with them went the nominated members also. 

The lack of enthusiasm on the part of the elected as also those of the nominated and official members resulted in the irregularity of holding meetings. The number of meetings held by the all classes of Rural Boards was very disappointing. Despite the short distance of residence and the leisure engaged by well to do members, records of attendance in meetings was deplorable.

Regarding the business transactioned the deliberations centred round fund allocations. Principles and rules of expenditure were rarely discussed. Naturally all policy decisions were left to the Collector or Divisional Officer. This defeated the very purpose of the scheme. Unfamiliarity with the English language and lack of experience in administration was another serious handicap for the ordinary members. Craze for appointment and employment of relatives seemed to be the sole occupation of many members. A majority of the members were indifferent to the proceedings of the Board.

84. Proceedings of the Madras Native Association p.16
85. Local Boards Report 1892-93 p.2
Excessive control of the District and Taluk Boards crushed the initiative and interest of the Unions. The District Board President had many powers to control the activities of Taluk and Union Boards. Lively discussions and deliberations leading to formulations of guidelines and principles were lacking. Excessive overriding powers with the District Collector sapped the interest of the Boards and made them subservient. However, in the Taluk Boards, the situation improved when the system of appointing Presidents by election was introduced.87

The progress of the local self government in the rural parts was not up to the expectation of the policy makers. The degree of independence granted to them was meagre. Infact, people obtained little experience. Nevertheless, the Local Boards have played a vital role in creating awareness in the people about self-help, administrative training, leadership and political consciousness during the days of the historic struggle for independence.

Anantapur Local Boards were no exception to the general conditions prevailing in the Local Boards all over the Madras Presidency. The composition of the Boards at the three levels tended towards a preponderance of members from the educated and affluent classes, particularly wealthy landlords and merchants. Representation from the Minority Communities except perhaps the Muslims and the Depressed Classes was conspicuous by their absence. The average attendance in all the Local Boards was quite unsatisfactory, as the reports

87. *ibid.*, pp 56-61

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themselves indicate. Participation of the members in the discussions and debates was negligible by all standards. Involvement of the members in their responsibilities was below the expectation often, the authorities had to pull them up. Yet, the overall performance of the Anantapur District Board was better on the whole.

It must be said in fairness to the experiment of the Local Self-government in the Anantapur District, that conditions were not beyond repair and redemption. Since the dawn of the present century with relaxation of official restriction and the introduction of the principle of elections, things began to improve fast for the better. Structural patterns of the various Boards were changed to accommodate more and more non-official segments, and the deprived classes of populations.

With the spread of education and national awareness, people became more civic conscious and public-spirited. Particularly after the passing of the Local Boards Act of 1920, there was an impressive change in the average citizen's attitude towards and involvement in the Local Boards. The era of liberalism, decentralization and democratization which began with the epoch-making saga of Lord Ripon was further intensified. Local Self-Government had come to stay and serve in the Anantapur District. The traditions of Sir. Thomas Murio were continued and improved.

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