

# Historical Evolution of Anantapur Zilla Parishad

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The evolution of local self-government in Anantapur District has historical significance. The British experimented the local self government in Bombay and Madras presidencies<sup>1</sup>. The Madras presidency is one of the largest presidencies in the British India. It extended in an area of 126166 square miles. It had the sizable part with fertile soil and agriculture was the major occupation. Rain fall was very less and almost the rivers were dried up in summer<sup>2</sup>. Droughts and famines were quite common except delta regions<sup>3</sup>. Size and growing population of the presidency had an impact on the administration. For administrative convenience presidency was divided into districts. By 1850 the presidency consisted 19 districts and by 1919 the number of districts went up to 25. Each district was divided as Taluks and each Taluk into a number of villages<sup>4</sup>.

In fact, the history of statutory panchayat system in Madras can, be found in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century enactments which continued the institutions of Karanam<sup>5</sup>. He was also recognized as Munsif by 1816 regulation. He was given the power to deal suits within a limit of Rs.10. In case of higher value cases he could assemble the village panchayat to decide cases. He had the power to try petty criminal cases and award punishments. Gradually village panchayats fell into disuse. But in 1880s attempts were made to strengthen them.

## 1. Rural Boards in Madras Presidency

In Madras presidency the term Local Boards is used to denote the authorities exercising jurisdiction in affairs of local-self-government outside the Municipalities. Local Boards were institutions concerned with the matters of rural areas lying away from urban centers. Rural Boards responsibilities and powers extended over an area of 1,22,800 square miles with 38 million population<sup>6</sup>. Community development was the main duty of local boards in their respective area.

Local Fund Board was fore runner of the modern District Board in the Madras Presidency. On account of voluntary efforts taken by the collector Arcot in 1853, the origin of Rural Boards took place<sup>7</sup>. Other districts followed this laudable example. For welfare of the districts, the idea of 'local fund' became common. The levy of education cess was sanctioned in 1863<sup>8</sup>

As the result of the Act of 1871 the Local Fund Board came into existence. Local fund boards were meant for the development of rural areas with different functions with fixed sources of income. In each district the rural areas were divided into administrative "circles" and would be under a local board. The Madras Presidency was accordingly divided into 36 "Circles". Based on the number of population some districts were divided into more than one "Circle"<sup>9</sup>.

Lord Rippons reforms in the field of local-self government caused significant changes. To secure local knowledge smaller administrative units were preferred and create more effective interest<sup>10</sup>. As per the local self-government recommendations Madras government passed the Local Board Act of 1884. Accordingly a three tier system of rural institutions were adopted with the District Boards. The Taluk Boards, each consisting of one or more revenue Taluks and the Union panchayats each comprising of one or more villages<sup>11</sup>.

The 1915 resolution recommended the formation of village panchayats in preferable areas selectively and a single panchayat for various duties. The Madras presidency government directed the district authorities to form village panchayats in selected villages based on population of 3000 and less. But this new experiment failed to reach even five percent of the rural population<sup>12</sup>.

The 1920 village panchayats Act gave an opportunity to villages that had enough public spirit to have a panchayat constituted in their respective village and perform statutory powers in all matters relating to education, health, sanitation and protection. In Madras presidency the element of compulsion to form panchayats was still to come. There was a wide scope in 1920 Act for the restoration of the ancient village life. By 1924-25 there were 579 panchayats and their number increased in the following years in the Madras presidency.<sup>13</sup>

The Madras presidency had a large corporation with a high number of elected representatives, an elected president and a strong independent executive authority by the year 1919. The district Municipalities of the Madras presidency had secured a stable position in the scheme of local self-government. Over the years Municipality in the Madras presidency had elected bodies, with elected chairman. However the development of rural boards were backward than that of municipalities in the Madras presidency. Elections for local boards were introduced slowly and election franchise was narrow and the qualification for candidates was high<sup>14</sup>.

## 2. The Anantapur Experience

The Anantapur district was a part of the Madras presidency in the old ceded districts. The whole district of Anantapur was under Vijayanagara rulers<sup>15</sup>. Later on Palegars ruled a good portion of district, who were tributaries of Golkonda and Cuddapah Nawabs and the Maratha kings. Later Hider Ali and Tipu sultan captured.

After Anglo-Mysore wars in 1800 the southern portion of Nizams territories, areas below the Thungabra river were seized by British towards payment for British army under subsidiary alliance. Thus a large portion of the land was

included to the portions of the British East India Company in south India<sup>16</sup>

### 3. A Brief Profile of Anantapur District

Anantapur district is situated to the south east of Bellary. When the British East India company acquired ceded districts, the Madras presidency government appointed Sir Thomas Munro as the Collector of the ceded district. Bellary was separated from Anantapur in 1882 and formed into separate district. The Anantapur district modern history starts in the early part of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, according to the policies of the Madras presidency, its status and frontiers have been changing<sup>17</sup>

In the year 1910 it was expanded with the addition of revenue mandals of Mudigubba, Kadiri, NPKunta, Nallmada, Thalupula, OD Cheruvu, Nallacheruvu, Thanakallu, Amadaguru and Gandlapenta from Cuddapah district. In 1956 the present revenue mandals of Gummagata, Bommanahal, Kanekal, Dehirehal and Rayadurg of Bellary district was added to Anantapur district.

The district has been divided into four revenue divisions consisting of 63 Revenue Mandals (Anantapur division 20, Dharmavaram division 17, Penukonda and kadiri division 26) Anantapur, Tadipatri, Gooty, penukonda, Dharmavaram, Hindupur and Madakasira were the main Taluks.

### 4. Topography

Anantapur district lies between 13°-40' and 15° 15' northern latitude and 76°-50' and 78°-30' eastern longitude

### 5. Boundaries of Anantapur District

Anantapur district boundaries are on the east by Cuddapah and Chittoor and on the south and west by the east while Mysore state. The district may be divided into three natural regions. They are;

1. Northern Mandals of Yallonur, Putrlur Tadipatri, Yadiiki, Vidapanakal, Uravakonda, Kanekal, Vajrakarur, Guntakal, Gooty, Beluguppa, Kanekal and Rayadurg containing large portion of lands are block cotton soils.
2. Peddavadugur, Pamidi, Kudaie, Anantapur, Midigubba, Tadimarri, Battalapalli, Dharmavaram, C.K.Palli, Kanaganapalli, Ramagiri, Bramhasamudram, Settur, Kambadur and Kalyandurg are in the centre of the district which consists of arid treeless red soils.
3. High level land of Hindupur, Somandepalli, Roddam, Penukonda, Agali, Gudibanda, Rolla, Madakasira, Chilamattur and Lepakshi which are adjoining to Mysore plateau at higher elevation of the District. This part of the district has sandy red soils.

### 6. Climatic conditions of Anantapur District.

Anantapur district has tolerable climatic conditions throughout the year. Anantapur district has a gradual slope from the South-North towards the pennar valley in Peddapappur, Tadipatri and Peddavadugur mandals.

In the south to adjoining Mysore plateau there is a gradual rise in Madakasira, Rolla, Agali, Chilamattur, Lepakshi, Parigi and Hindupur where the average elevation is about 2000 feet above sea level. It is highest at Anantapur 9000 feet lowest at Tadipatri

Anantapur district is the driest part of the state and peninsular region. Agriculture conditions are more often like gambling. Due to its unfortunate location monsoons evade Anantapur district. Being far away from East coast, Anantapur district is unable to receive North East monsoons. The South west monsoons also prevented due to cut off by the high western Ghats. The Anantapur district is therefore deprived of monsoons and subjected to famines on account of bad seasons. The Anantapur district average rainfall is 553.0 mms. The South west monsoons normal rainfall is 338.0mms which is about 61.2% of the average rainfall of the year. North East monsoon rainfall is 156.0mm average forms 28.3% of the year.

March, April and May month are almost dry and warm. The average maximum temperature ranges between 29.1<sup>0</sup> C to 40.3<sup>0</sup>C. November, December and January are cooler months which falls in winter season. Average temperature in this season is 15.7<sup>0</sup> to 20<sup>0</sup> C. Madakasira, Rolla, Agali, Chilamattur, Lepakshi, Parigi and Hindupur mandls are in high plateau are more cooler than rest of places in the district. In Anantapur district the forests are very scanty and thin. According to the census of 1881 the population of the district was 599889.

**Growth of Population of Anantapur District – 1947-2011**

Period	Rural Population	Urban Population	Total	Growth Rate %
1941	1019639	146590	1166225	--
1951	1139998	221558	1361556	16.75
1961	1459837	307627	1767464	29.81
1971	1739531	375790	2115321	19.68
1981	2017095	530917	2548012	20.46
1991	2435761	748053	3183814	24.95
2001	2720915	919563	3640478	14.34
2011	4081148	2935437	1145711	12.16

(Source: Chief Planning Officer, Anantapur)

Anantapur District often experienced the ravages of droughts and epidemics.<sup>19</sup>

In Anantapur District the pattern of commerce and trade is many agro based. Among the main industries of the district weaving, beedi making, oil pressing, sericulture, groundnut decorticating, mining<sup>20</sup>. The main crops are groundnut, paddy, jowar, bajra, ragi, maize, horsegram, korra, chillies, sugarcane, vegetables, cotton, ginger, castor, tobacco and turmeric, poultry farming, sheep breeding, dairy farming and orchards are other agricultural activities.<sup>21</sup>

During drought seasons migrations to neighboring states are common. Like Anantapur's history, it has a long and lively tradition of education with colleges, number of schools and universities. Telugu, Urdu, Kannada, Tamil, Marathi, Lambadi, Hindi, Malayam and Erukala languages are spoken here.<sup>22</sup>

### 7. Evolution of Local Self Government in the District

From many centuries Anantapur has an impressive history of local self government. We came to know that in pre-vijayanagara days villages had local assemblies called 'Urs' transacted all business on behalf of inhabiting people of the village<sup>23</sup> 'Sabhas' in the villages not only redressed public grievances but also collected taxes and exercised judicial functions<sup>24</sup> under the rule of various dynasties the local bodies in the region were concerned with municipal duties like land grants, the acquisition and disposal of lands, collection of imperial taxes, levying of local taxes, judicial administration, control of endowments and temples and the bestowing of honors on deserving persons.<sup>25</sup>

The Anantapur district also came under the influence of the British system of local self government as elsewhere in the Madras presidency<sup>26</sup>. From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the British established new system of administration in the ceded district after strengthening law and order. Sir Thomas Manro was an efficient and benevolent administrator, who reached to the hearts of the people of the district<sup>27</sup>. Sir Thomas Manro's famous Rythwari system enabled the village peasantry to directly enjoy the protection of the government and be guided in the rules and regulations of local affairs<sup>28</sup>.

Efficient measures were taken in the direction of introducing local self government in the region in 1850. The Madras presidency passed the Act XXVI for introducing district Municipalities in the towns. The people of such towns must be desirous of making better sanitation conditions in the town. A good number of voluntary organizations came up for sanitary and other services. One of such associations was formed in the Bellary district which was part of Anantapur district<sup>29</sup>.

Under the provision of the board of Revenue the district collector raised a fund to spend for roads development in the district. Rents from passenger boats fishery rents, carts and grasses, avenue tree clippings and the proceeds of the cattle fund were added to the fund. But 1863 education cess used for the maintenance of schools in the Anantapur district did not give the desired results<sup>30</sup>.

1865 town improvement act and 1871 Local Fund Act IV formed Municipalities and Local Fund Boards respectively. The whole Madras presidency was divided as circles and each circle had a Local Fund Board. The Bellary District, once Anantapur was a part, was made 3 circles. Anantapur, Gooty, Tadipatri, Adoni and Alur Taluks constituted the first circle. Madakasira, Penukonda and Hindupur made the second, and Hospet, Bellary and Rayadurg formed the second. Once Kadiri was a part of the Madanapalli circle which was in Kadapa district. In 1882 with the formation of Anantapur district the government converted three Local Fund circles into two one common with Bellary and other circle with Anantapur<sup>31</sup>.

The 1884 Local Boards Act V was placed to replace the Act of IV of 1871. It enabled the formation of a District Board at district level. A Divisional or a Taluk board at Taluk level and a union Board for a group of villages or a village<sup>32</sup>. Thus the union boards formed were Hindupur, Penkonda, Dharmavaram, Kalyandurg, Uravakonda Tadipatri, Gooty and

Madakasira. In 1887 pamidi, in 1889Yadiki were constituted as Unions<sup>34</sup>.

In Anantapur district between 1890 and 1920 several changes took place in constitution and functions of the local boards. Taluk boards were reorganized from three to four. They were Penukonda, Dharmavaram, Gooty and Anantapur<sup>35</sup>. Kadiri Taluk was added to Anantapur district in 1911. Amarapuram was constituted into a union in 1914<sup>36</sup>. Timmanacherla and Guntakal were merged and constituted into a single union in 1916. Yellanur, Singanamala and Konakondla were constituted into unions in 1918 and Beluguppa in 1919there were 18 unions in Anantapur district<sup>37</sup>.

Different classes of Local Boards got independent status in Anantapur district by the Local Boards Act XIV of 1900. The governments interference was minimized and only in the case of emergency or misrule such instances took place. The Local Boards became autonomous. An Inspector of Municipal councils and Local Boards was appointed to supervise their affairs<sup>38</sup>. In 1921 the Local Boards Act came into force. In 1922 the local boards act became operative. In Anantapur district there were four Taluk Boards. (Dharmavaram, penukonda, Gooty and Anantapur)<sup>39</sup>.

## 8. Functions of Local Boards in Anantapur District

The 1871 Local Fund Board Act enabled the formation of a local boards in each circle. The District Collector as ex-officio member and some non officials nominated by the Governor's council, were the members of local board. The ratio between officials and non officials should be less than 50% or less than three fourth of the total strength. Nominated non-officials were occupiers or land owners in the 'Circle'. Persons doing business there or residing in the Circle<sup>40</sup>The District collector was the president of the Circle Board and the whole administrative powers were vested in him. The Vice-President of the boards was appointed by the Governor-in-Council<sup>41</sup>

The Anantapur District circle board consists of 40 members, 19 officials and 21 non officials<sup>42</sup> The nomination system to the local boards failed to bring the capable candidates into the local boards. There were frequent demands in favor of elections of the members to the boards<sup>43</sup>

The 1884 local boards Act formed three kinds of local bodies namely, The district boards, the Taluk boards and the union panchayats. The total strength of the board should be not less than twenty four including non-officials. It was decided that the number of nominated non-officials should not be more than one fourth of total strength of the board. But there was no clarity for officials to contest in the elections<sup>44</sup>.

The officer in charge of a Revenue Division of the district was usually an ex-officio member of the District Board. The act laid down certain guidelines regarding the appointment of remaining nonofficial members, that they may be partly nominated by Governor-in-Council or partly elected. As per as the Taluk boards and union panchayats were concerned, tax payers and other inhabitants off the district who had no taluk boards should be elected as members<sup>45</sup>.

The District Collector was usually considered as president of District Board, the executive powers vested in his hands. However, the Board members could be elected as president with the permission of Governor-in-Council. Every board had a vice-president also, who had been nominated or elected<sup>46</sup>. In 1885 the Anantapuram district board was constituted with twenty four members six of them were officials and the rest non-officials. Initially all of them were appointed by Government for three years term. The nominated members were from other departments of the district. Non-official members were from taluk boards and natives of the district<sup>47</sup>.

In 1896 the district board under took drought relief work. District Board of Anantapur used its resources for initiating new works and maintaining sanitation, medical education and communications<sup>48</sup>. In 1903 it was decided to enhance the strength of the district board from twenty four to twenty five<sup>49</sup>.

In 1908 the powers of nomination to non-official members to taluk boards were transferred from Government to District board president. One third of the taluk board members were allowed to be elected from 1909. Since then elected majority increased in district and taluk boards<sup>50</sup>.

In 1916 presidency government sought proposals from district board presidents regarding the possibility of constituting new panchayat unions in villages with a population of three thousand and above<sup>51</sup>. The 1918 government resolution ordered to increase elected majorities in all the local bodies and to contain the tradition of nomination, except in the case of inducting minority representation<sup>52</sup>. The resolution further recommended to induct a few experts without voting rights in the district boards. Non-official should be the chairman of the union boards, preferably elected member<sup>53</sup>.

The 1920 Madras Local Boards Act completely removed the official block. The district collectors and Revenue divisional officers would be considered as ex-officio members of the respective local boards. Except village headmen all Government officials were not allowed to contest elections<sup>54</sup>.

The number of elective members were hereafter decided by the boards on their own. The presidency government withhold only the power to nominate candidates to district boards<sup>55</sup>. The number of the elected members were raised from 24 to 28 in the district board. The number of nominated candidates reduced from twelve to eight. There was no direct

election to district board president. A government order emphasized the need of equal representation of backward and depressed classes<sup>56</sup>.

In Anantapur district Taluk were boards formed in 1886. Taluk boards were formed for each Taluk or a group of Taluks with a president and not less than 12 members. They were partly elected and partly appointed by the union boards. Their term of office was fixed as 3 years. Revenue divisional officers were ex-officio presidents of these boards<sup>57</sup>.

In Anantapur district there were four Taluk boards by 1893. The total number of members forty eight of which sixteen were officials. In 1910 Sri P. Kesava Pillai was elected as the Vice-president of Gooty Taluk board<sup>58</sup>. 1920 local boards Act raised the strength of local boards up to 24. The Taluk board president became ex-officio member of the district board<sup>59</sup>.

## 9. Union Panchayats

The 1884 Act revived the ancient system of local-self government which trained the people in the art of self-government. In Madras presidency there were 54,000 villages but 400 unions were formed<sup>60</sup>. It was proposed to form village panchayats in 1915 in identified areas with only limited powers<sup>61</sup>. The 1920 village panchayat Act enabled to constitute a village panchayat with statutory powers in all matters<sup>62</sup>. As for as Anantapur District is concerned the union panchayats started to function from October 1886. Nine union boards started initially. According to 1885 rules the voting right was given to residents in the unions who have above 25 years of age and who pay house tax and land revenue<sup>63</sup>.

In Anantapur district there were 11 union boards by 1893. The ward system was introduced in 1899. But it did not function well<sup>64</sup>. From 1911 onwards the system of election was introduced in unions. 1916 government order introduced the formation of Major union panchayats with a population of not less than eight thousand and other union panchayats considered as minor panchayats<sup>65</sup>. On basis of wards seats in the major union panchayats allowed to election. Tadipatri, Hindupur, Kadiri, Bukkapatnam, Penukonda, Uravakonda and Gooty became major panchayats. In 1918 Yellonuru, Singanamala, Konakondla, and in 1919 Beluguppa became unions. There were 18 union panchayats in which 9 major unions by 1919. Maximum and minimum strength of union boards were 15 and 7 by the year 1920.

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