

CHAPTER - VII

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Once the seat of a mighty Adilshahi empire, (1489-1686) Bijapur had Sultans and Statesmen, Amirs and Adalats, Armies and Arsenals, Engineers and Architects, Parks and Palaces, and very many other things which bespoke considerable social advancement, rich past and glorious culture. It is in this historical background that municipal administration of Bijapur has been examined in this study.

The record of the expansion and progress of the Bijapur municipality during 1854 to 1954 is an inspiring one. When the municipality was started in 1854, a century and a half after the fall of the Adil Shahi dynasty, complete desolation had settled on the city. From a royal capital it had been reduced to the status of a minor taluka, of the Satara Collectorate. The once populous city of 10 lakhs, the Queen of Southern India for two centuries, presented an example of departed greatness a vast city covered with "long lines of fallen houses, ruined mansions and lonely patches of jungle, stretching far and wide in a waste, whose desolation, glimpses of noble buildings, some fairly preserved, others in ruins make the more striking Half its interior is a dreary waste with

almost nothing save fallen palaces and roofless dwellings overgrown with custard apples and other wild shrubs." There were no roads, no schools, no lights, no civic conveniences of any kind. It was at this time of - unrelieved gloom that the Bijapur Municipality was established in 1854. It proved the turning point in the history of the city. With the establishment of the municipality a new city started growing up from amidst the ruins of the old with many civic conveniences. By 1954, hundred years after the establishment, the city had 32 miles of roads, 11 miles of drainage, 13 miles of piped water supply, 3 hospitals, 33 schools. As we look back on the history of Bijapur municipality from 1854 to 1954 we notice that some work of note has been done.

Examining various aspects of development with this in mind, Bijapur municipality has been assessed. During the period under examination 1854-1954, the study finds that these hundred years marks an important phase in the history of Bijapur Municipality.

The study reveals that the establishment and evolution of the Bijapur Municipality is a landmark in the progressive march of local self governing institutions of the district. Hence a brief survey has been made, in the second chapter, to understand the establishment and evolutionary phases of Bijapur municipal development. The

development has been divided into seven main phases, and each phase has its own significance. Every change has introduced an democratic element in the working of Bijapur municipal administration. The brief survey of the evolution of the municipal constitution given in this chapter shows how the official and nominated elements was progressively eliminated giving place to a wholly elected body of municipal councillors (1940) and how women and Scheduled Classes were given representation (1940 and 1950). The classification of general constituencies into Muslims and Non-Muslims is the clear example to the British policy of divide and rule on communal basis. This communal classification was abolished by the amended Municipal Act of 1950 after the attainment of independence.

Municipal administration is of great importance in the municipal life of any city. The administration has become an essential part of a society and dominated factor in life in the modern age. Hence in the third chapter administrative aspect of Bijapur municipality has been dealt. The study reveals that efficiency of municipal functions and its services to the community a greater deal depends upon qualitative and quantitative performance of its personnel. From the study of Bijapur municipal administration it is evident that the municipal administration was efficient to greater extent since its inception. The

fact that there has been a progressive increase in income from every source itself speaks about the effective municipal administration. For example, the income from House Tax was Rs. 30,819/- for the year 1939-40. Till then the increase in income recorded for every fifth year was about Rs. 2,000/-. Not only in the field of collection of rates and taxes, but in every field municipality of Bijapur has shown efficiency to greater extent. If it has not come to the expectation of the rate payers, it is due to certain inadequacies like financial inadequacy, lack of adequate popular pressure and administrative support. These factors also play important part in making administration - efficient to greater extent. Added to these are the problems of urban development and administration are increasing day-by-day and people on the other hand had large expectations of effective performance from the municipalities. Due to all these reasons municipal administration is not coming to the expectations of the rate payers in most of the cases and it cannot be denied that Bijapur municipality was yet far from fulfilling the requirements of a modern ideal municipality.

It may be suggested that if the defects of municipal administration like corruption, indecisions are rectified and staff working in the municipal government is of high calibre, prompt and efficient then only -

administration of municipalities can come to the expectations of rate payers.

As regards the income and expenditure the study finds that Bijapur municipal revenue has shown a considerable rise during the period from 1854-1954. An analysis of the various statements of municipal income and expenditure speaks for it. Octroi and other rates and taxes have contributed to this rise. Grants and contribution from the State Government also another important source of municipal income.

As regards the expenditure it is found that there is heavy expenditure incurred towards payment of salaries and allowances to the municipal employees. Though the expenditure on general administration appears to be heavy, it is bound to be natural. Because the municipal administration is charged primarily with the functions of maintenance of services and enforcement of provisions of the various municipal Acts. The growth of population, increase in the number of houses, schools, hospitals naturally results in an increase in the number of municipal employees. This is the main cause of the heavy expenditure on establishment.

The fact that Bijapur municipality has spent Rs. 5,36,683/- for public health and sanitation in the year 1954-55 out of the total expenditure of Rs. 14,09,543/- indicates that the municipality was conscious of its responsibilities in the matter of public health and sanitation and had, therefore, spent large amount for this purpose. For education also the Bijapur municipality has spent Rs. 3,45,316/- in the same year. This means public health and education has lion's share in the municipal expenditure and this also means that Bijapur municipality was aware of its responsibilities while discharging these two functions. Hence it has spent Rs. 8,81,999/- out of the total expenditure of Rs. 14,09,543/- in the year 1954-55.

It may be suggested that if the expenditure is done judiciously, the municipalities can provide an excellent level to make municipal finance development oriented. The proper management and utilization of funds is as important as raising finances. Unfortunately our urban local authorities are very sadly deficient in this respect. They are dominated almost entirely by local politicians who are incompetent and corrupt. This often result in heavy expenditure on personal maintenance etc.

Municipalities at the same time must try to increase their revenue by tapping new sources. Because local self

government can have an assured future only when they are endowed with ample funds. Unfortunately in our country no municipality can raise all of its required funds out of its ordinary resources and at the same time it cannot expect more financial assistance, or more advance of loans from state governments. Because the poverty of the country and the competing demands on resources stand in the way of liberal income transfers from the high level government to the local bodies. Hence greatest handicap experienced by municipalities in India in this respect present peculiar problems.

Coming to the education it seems that Bijapur municipality had made great progress in this field. There has been an increase in the educational functions, comparatively also in the number of pupils. There has been good progress in girl students taking to education. It seems that municipality had taken due care to the needs of education which can be considered remarkable. The functional efficiency of Bijapur municipal council in terms of constructed school buildings of its own in comparison to the hired one appears to be encouraging. Perhaps this may be because of the efficient functioning of the municipal School Board.

It is interesting to note that though Bijapur was predominantly a Kannada speaking area the education of the

language minorities, such as Marathi and Urdu was given due importance.

As regards the sanitation and public health study reveals that the Bijapur municipality was conscious of its responsibilities. Hence it has spent Rs. 5,36,683/- for public health and sanitation in the year 1954-55 out of the total expenditure of Rs. 14,09,543/-. Public health and sanitation had always greater share in the total expenditure. Bijapur municipality had effectively checked the epidemics like Plague, Cholera by taking both preventive and curative measures. Bijapur municipality was the first to undertake new method of cyno-gas fumigation as an antiplague measure in the whole of the Bombay Presidency. To provide free medical aid to the general public Bijapur municipality had opened three hospitals, one of which was providing genuine Ayurvedic medicines.

The death rate in the municipal area, can be laid down as one of the criteria to determine the efficiency of the work of municipality in the fields of public health and sanitation. It is believed that the higher the death rate, the lower is the efficiency of municipal administration. If we judge the efficiency of municipal health department by this criteria then the efficiency of Bijapur municipality cannot be questioned. Because the vital statistics for 30 years from 1923-24 show how the death rate has been gradually decreasing. Bijapur municipality has always made sincere

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efforts for lowering down the death rate by opening hospitals, providing free medicines, performing vaccinations and supplying pure drinking water. As a result the percentage of death rate has gone down from 32 per cent per thousand in 1924-25 to 12.00 per thousand in the year 1952-53.

The above functions carried out by the Bijapur municipality and the developments which have taken place during 1854 to 1954 have definitely contributed to the urbanization of the Bijapur city. The old semi village pattern of the city has gradually turned into a new urban centre. The city has grown in size and population. Therefore, this period, 1854-1954, marks an important phase in the evolution of the city.

These are some of the conclusions which can be drawn from the study of Bijapur municipality during 1854 to 1954.

BIJAPUR MUNICIPALITY TODAY :

Bijapur today is facing all the problems that growing city faces. Civic amenities such as water supply, housing, sanitation are rapidly deteriorating. Roads are in worst condition. Developmental activities have come to the point of stand still. No serious attempts are being made by Bijapur municipality to solve these urban problems. Reason for this is Bijapur municipality had no adequate

funds and resources to grapple with stupendous problem of urban construction. Main cause for this deteriorating financial condition of the Bijapur municipality is the abolition of octroi in the year 1979 by Karnataka government. Octroi constitutes the major portion of municipal income and abolition of which greatly affected the municipal finance. Karnataka government after abolishing octroi has done nothing to compensate this loss of revenue. Because of this not only Bijapur municipality but almost all the municipalities in Karnataka are facing great financial crisis. Unless something is done to improve the financial condition of municipalities in Karnataka, there is no bright future for municipal institutions. It may be suggested that a separate divisible pool should be created for allocating grants to local bodies. It should be fed out of assistance given by central and state government.

Fortunately central government is thinking seriously in this direction now-a-days. On July 7, 1989, at the conference of the Chief Ministers, holding of elections to urban local bodies by the election commission and direct financial assistance by the centre to these bodies were favoured. In his address our Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, said urban local bodies needed power, responsibility and incentive to seek their own resources. There must be devolution of funds along with those of functions from the state government, he said. Mr. Gandhi

also called for devolution of funds from central revenue to the urban bodies, either through agency of state government or in some special cases, even directly to the municipal bodies. (Deccan Herald, Bangalore 8/7/1989).

It may be suggested at the same time that intelligent educated and influential men in the community must take interest and active part in the municipal administration to make it efficient. Lord Ripon, father of local self government desired the same. " What I want " he wrote " is the gradual training of the best, most intelligent and influential men in the community to take an interest and active part in the management of their local affairs." But unfortunately ignorant and uneducated people normally are managing the local affairs today. Municipal funds and property, hence, many times is misused. Unless educated and intelligent person take active part in the local municipal affairs, corruption, favouritism, indecisions are done away with and financial problem is solved; these local bodies had no bright future.

At the same time to neglect or to set aside these institutions because there are defects will be a foolishness. There is wiseness in improving their lot and going along with them, because as Burns has said, " Self government is better than good government. "

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