

# Evolution of Administrative Reforms in Hyderabad State

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## Abstract

*Independent India inherited three basic constituents of modern state in 1947 – a rudimentary framework of a minimally representative structure of government, a predominantly bureaucratic state apparatus, and a hugely popular party of mass appeal born in the movement for political freedom, namely, the Indian National Congress. These three inheritances have significantly contributed to democratic origin and democratic consolidation and deepening in India, a rare achievement in the Afro-Asian world defying the long-held theories of pre-conditions for the success of democracy linking it with higher levels of economic and educational development. India has been deficient in both of these preconditions, yet it has managed to be a reasonably successful democracy.*

*Keywords: inherited, constituents, rudimentary, bureaucratic, apparatus, preconditions*

## Introduction

Administrative reforms have been a major concern of the government of India, if one goes by the sheer number of the reports of the central committees or commissions on administrative reforms set up since 1945-46, when the Richard Tottenham Report on the Reorganization of the Central Government was prepared and submitted. The list of such reports extends considerably if one includes commissions with mandates larger than administrative reforms per se, e.g. commissions on centre-state relations and on review of the working of the constitution which do not exclude administrative reforms from their scope.<sup>1</sup> This paper describes and critically reviews these reforms and the Hyderabad state discourse about them, and puts this within the broader context of the various phases of the evolutionary development of the Indian political system in the last sixty-four years since the Independence in 1947.

## Reforms in Hyderabad State:

A Precursor to Modernization in Telangana While tracing the evolution of administrative reforms in Telangana, it is imperative to analyse the socioeconomic development process that took place in Hyderabad state during the period 1853 to 1948. The period 1853-1883 is crucial, as it marks the beginning of reforms undertaken by Salar Jung I, the Prime Minister to three Nizams. The period between 1853 and 1948 is crucial for understanding this transformation. The distinctiveness of Hyderabadi culture and its ethos formed a basis for the demand of separate statehood both during the pre and post-independence period. The modern period has been pre-eminently a time for searching the hitherto forgotten or neglected aspects, records and sources as well as to bring out the new sources of information by delving into archival records and critically analyzing the contradictory interpretations. This analysis of 'looking back' will help the state in 'looking ahead' for future administrative reforms.

### **Salient Features of Salar Jung reforms**

The year 1853 signifies the beginning of Salar Jung's reforms which led to the fundamental changes in the administrative and socio-economic-cultural fields in the Nizam's Dominions. The administration of the Nizam's government was carried by the Prime Minister/Diwan advised by the British Resident in important matters, and assisted by a Peshkar or deputy minister and four departmental ministers or heads of the department. Sir Mir Turab Ali Khan, popularly known as Salar Jung I, assumed the Office of Diwan (Prime Minister) under the Nizam IV in 1853. He has served as the Prime Minister to three Nizams for 30 years (1853-1883).



Sir Mir Turab Ali Khan - Salar Jung I

As the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, Salar Jung I was responsible for the restructuring of administrative system and the socio-economic relations. The land tenure, agrarian reforms, fiscal and taxation policies,

encouragement for the growth of trade, commerce and modern industries, etc., have played a crucial role in the process of modernization and socio-economic transformation. Mir Mahboob Ali Khan was two year and seven months old, when he became the Monarch-VI Nizam in 1869. During his period Salar Jung I also served as the Regent of the Hyderabad state. The personality and noble life of Sir Salar Jung had a great influence on Asaf Jah VI, who became a popular ruler and “beloved of the people”. The reign of the sixth Nizam, Mir Mahaboob Ali Pasha 1869-1911 was also significant in bringing about major changes in the political, administrative, socio-economic and cultural fields. He was a popular ruler of Hyderabad who became the “beloved of the people”. He was liberal and a visionary. The multi-faceted progress in the fields of administration, industries, trade and commerce and education ushered in the transition of the Hyderabad State from medievalism to modernity. The reforms of Salar Jung and the sixth Nizam were carried forward by the last Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, 1911-1948.

### **Administrative and Revenue Reforms**

The major characteristics of Salar Jung’s reforms include the centralization of authority in the Taluqdar at the district level, the institutionalization of the revenue functions, and the concentration of administrative control in the Prime Minister at State level. The first phase of Salar Jung’s reform (1853-64) began with an attempt to mitigate some of the most blatant evils of the former administration. To begin with, the area under Diwani or Khalsa administration was gradually enlarged by resuming the ‘Tankhah Jagirs’. In 1855 paid Talukdars (Collectors) were appointed in place of revenue contractors/farmers/ guttedars. Salar Jung I found it necessary to re-distribute the Hyderabad State into well-defined and regular districts called Zillas, subdivided into a fixed number of Taluks with definite areas and boundaries administered by a regular establishment working under the direct control of the government.



Source:Socio-Economic Outlook 2017

Accordingly, the Hyderabad State was divided into five regional divisions (Subas) and fourteen Zillas or districts. Later in 1877-78 Nagarkurnool and in 1879-80 Gulbarga districts were created and the total number of districts in the Diwani area went up to sixteen. Each Zilla was headed by an Awwal Talukdar or District Collector who was assisted by Doyum and Suvvam Taluqdars. For each regional division, a Sardar Talukdar was appointed. The districts were classified into three grades with reference to the approximate amount of their annual revenue. The first revenue survey was undertaken in the entire district of Aurangabad on an experimental basis in 1874-75. These administrative reforms led to the growth of a new professional bureaucracy based on merit and efficiency. The other important reform introduced by Salar Jung was the stabilization of currency. A central mint was established at Hyderabad and the district mints were abolished. He issued Hali Sikka rupees and this became the standard currency for all monetary transactions. As per the Salar Jung's reforms the system of farming out the taxes on imports and exports was abolished. The government treasury was established in the city, and the customs department was taken over by the government. In the year 1861 a Stamp paper office was established and in 1863 the first judicial secretariat was established under the Prime Minister. Thus by 1864, the basic revenue and regulatory functions had been firmly set up by Salar Jung. The main objective of Salar Jung's revenue reforms was to provide economic stability of the state.



Source:Socio-Economic Outlook 2017

He had abolished tax farming system, and appointed Talukdars, who were paid salaries by the state. Thus, the peasant was brought in direct touch with the state, and relieved from the exploitation of the revenue farmers. The success of Salar Jung's revenue policy was evident from the fact that the total tax revenue collected increased between 1853 and 1880 by nearly three and half times.

### **Education and Administrative Reforms**

During the time of Salar Jung I, a number educational institutions were established. Salar Jung took a keen interest in the development of modern education and the decade 1871 - 1880 witness progress in Education. The very first step taken towards the formation of a state educational system was opening of Oriental college as Dar-ul-Ulum by Salar Jung at Hyderabad in 1853-54; with 130-160 pupils on roll. This college imparted knowledge of oriental lore in the Deccan and taste of learning through two classical languages, viz., Arabic and Persian. Provision was also made for instruction in four modern languages – Urdu, Telugu, English, and Marathi. Subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Astronomy formed part of the curriculum. In 1860, a school was opened in each district headquarters and Taluk headquarters. A School of Engineering was established in 1870 to produce the required technical staff to public work department. In the year 1876, students were awarded foreign scholarships to go abroad for advanced study. They were also promised employment in government services on completion of their studies in such advance courses. To improve administrative standards Salar Jung recruited talented people from all over the country, mainly from north India. In the first phase of reforms from 1853 to 1883 the efforts of Salar Jung to modernize the administration required officials trained in British India.

### **Police and Judicial Reforms**

The law and order was separated from Revenue department and a separate Police Department called Mahakma-i-Kotwali was established. A Police force called Nizamath was created. Salar Jung contemplated a reorganization of the judiciary with a separation of civil and criminal powers, increased powers to the High Court, the appointment of a legal Secretary, and the creation of Supreme Judicial Council over the High Court. A number of Judicial officers called Munsifs and Mir Adils were appointed and they exercised judicial powers in civil and criminal cases respectively

### **Public Works**

During the late 19th century the Nizams government began medium and major irrigation projects under the supervision of the public works department. The government evolved a definite policy of preserving and maintaining the tanks, wells, channels and other minor irrigation works. During the reign of Mir Osman Ali Khan, especially in the 1920's, a number of medium and major irrigation projects were built. The Ghanpur Anicut was the first scheme constructed across Manjira river in 1904. Nizamsagar was the largest irrigation project in the erstwhile Hyderabad state. The construction of Nizamsagar dam began in 1923 and completed by the year. The Wyara and Palair projects in the Warangal district were completed in 1927. These irrigation projects not only afforded protection against famine but also yielded a handsome income and profits to the farmers.

### **Growth of Industries**

The Salar Jung's reforms, in terms of reorganization of administrative structure, infrastructural development, changes in socio-economic system, innovative policies played a crucial role for the development of modern industry. Initiatives taken in some of the major industries are discussed below.

### **Railways:**

The beginning of modern railway system in the Hyderabad State can be traced back to the year 1862, when the Government of India ordered the construction of a railroad from Sholapur to Hyderabad. The Nizam's Government were prepared to construct the line as a 'State affair' or in financial partnership with the Government of India. In 1869 a line was surveyed from Gulbarga to Hyderabad by the Great Indian Peninsula (GIP) Railway Company and a year later Salar Jung, sanctioned the construction of a railway line from Gulbarga to Hyderabad. The Nizam's Government agreed to give the land free, grant jurisdiction over the line to officers appointed by the British Government. The Railway was regarded as the property of the Nizam Government, which provided funds for construction and received profits derived from its working. The first section of the line from Wadi to Secunderabad, 115.75 miles, was opened on 9th October 1874. The GIP Railway Company managed the line from 1874-1878 with its own rolling stock.



Source:Socio-Economic Outlook 2017



Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad

Source:Socio-Economic Outlook 2017

**Communication:**

Hyderabad was connected through the electric telegraph system for the first time with Bombay and Kurnool in 1856-57 and Salar Jung made use of the device for official purpose. Telegraphic lines were opened by the Government of India according to the Agreement of 1870. A regular postal communication between the capital city of Hyderabad and the districts was established. In 1869, the Postal Department was reorganized and the office of Post Master General was established in the metropolis to supervise, direct and control the postal arrangement in the entire Diwani territory.

**Cotton Industry:**

It was the most important industry in the Hyderabad State after agriculture. By 1908 there were three spinning and weaving mills at Hyderabad, Gulbarga and Aurangabad. The first cotton mill was opened in 1875 and later in 1886 and 1889, two more mills with a capital of Rs.31,00,000 were started. The cotton ginning and pressing factories were established in Aurangabad, Raichur, Bidar, Warangal, Nizamabad (Indur), Parbhani and Nanded districts. Cotton was the chief article of export in Hyderabad State and it accounted for 50 per cent of the total exports.

**Weaving and other Industries:**

It was a major industry in the rural areas, where men and women were employed. The cotton fabrics of Hyderabad like saris, dhotis, cadhis, rumals, etc, were famous all over India and abroad. Blankets and carpets were also produced in Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda and Warangal. Warangal was famous for its carpet industry. During the late 19th century Hyderabad was the biggest exporter of carpets to European countries. The wood

industry, the metal industry and the making of iron implements as well as basket making, oil pressing and liquor making were also active in Hyderabad.

### **The Legacy of Reforms**

All the above-mentioned reforms undertaken by the Salar Jung I have played a crucial role in the process of modernization and socio-economic transformation. Hence, as a visionary administrator, Sir Salar Jung was rightly described as “the architect and modernizer of Hyderabad State”. The reign of the sixth Nizam, Mir Mahaboob Ali Pasha 1869-1911, which got the benefit of Salar Jung’s reforms, continued the legacy and built on those reforms. The sixth Nizam, with his liberal and visionary administration, became a popular ruler and ‘beloved of the people’. The reforms of Salar Jung and the sixth Nizam were carried forward by the last Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, 1911–1948 which forms part of the rich legacy of administrative reforms inherited by Telangana, despite the aberrations during the period of combined statehood from 1956 to 2014.

### **CONCLUSION**

Summing up, the board thrusts of administrative reforms in India have aimed at three basic goals: improving the efficiency of administration internally and in relation to service delivery to the citizens; maintaining the thin line of demarcation between political neutrality of administration and party politics; and curbing corruption. A systematic empirical studies or even a series of such micro studies in a large number are still awaited. The available information, however, suggests that the Hyderabad administration is seriously focusing on all the three counts. One gross indicator of this state of affairs is the recurrence of public protests and anti-corruption movements locally, regionally, or nationally, including the India Against Corruption (IAC) campaign led by Anna Hazare since the heady Arab Spring of 2011, considered by some as the most important democratic moment since the Post-World War-II collapse of communist authoritarianism in the wake of the end of the Cold War around 1989. Indeed, the most telling evidence comes from a high-level union government administrative committee chaired by Home Secretary N.N. Vohra itself. In its report submitted to the government of India in 1993, the committee drew pointed attention to a nexus between politicians, criminals, police and bureaucrats in various parts of the country.

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