

Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya

September 16, 2020

India's legendary dam builder was born on September 15, 1861 at Muddenahalli near Chikkaballapur in Karnataka and went on to become one of India's greatest engineers. He was popularly called Sir MV. He is considered of the foremost nation-builders, creating modern marvels upon which modern India was built.

Contribution to Engineering

- He was the **chief engineer of Krishna Raja Sagara dam** in the north-west suburb of Mysuru city, and also served as one of the **chief engineers of the flood protection system for the city of Hyderabad**.
- He implemented an **intricate system of irrigation in the Deccan Plateau** and designed and patented a **system of automatic weir water floodgates** that were first installed in 1903 at Khadakvasla reservoir near Pune. These gates raised the storage level in the reservoir to the highest level likely to be attained without causing damage to the dam.
- In 1906–1907, the Government of India sent him to (the British colony of) Aden to study water supply and drainage systems. The project prepared by him was implemented in Aden successfully.
- He was instrumental in developing a **system to protect the Visakhapatnam port** from erosion by the sea. This dam created the **biggest reservoir in Asia** when it was built.

Contribution to Administration

- After opting for voluntary retirement in 1908, he took a foreign tour to study industrialized nations. Then, for a short period, he **worked for the Nizam of Hyderabad**.
- In 1912, he was **appointed as Diwan (second minister) of**

Mysore and served for seven years during the tenure of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, Maharaja of Mysore.

- He was instrumental in the **founding of Government Engineering College** at Bangalore in 1917, one of the first engineering institutes in India.
- The iconic **Mysore Soap Factory** was one of the factories he helped found.
- The **Mysore Iron & Steel Works** (now known as Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Limited) in Bhadravathi was another contribution of the man.
- He **encouraged private investment** in the industry sector during his tenure as Diwan of Mysore.
- The **Bangalore Press and the Bank of Mysore** were established during his tenure.

Other Contributions

- Though born into a Telugu Brahmin family, Sir MV's love for Kannada saw him implement several policies that helped **develop Kannada usage** in government matters.
- Sir M Visvesvaraya is known to have **designed and planned an entire area of Jayanagar in South Bangalore**, believed to have one of the best-planned layouts in Asia.

Recognition

- In pre-Independence India, during the British Raj, Sir MV was **knighted as a Knight Commander of the British Indian Empire** (KCIE) by King George V for his contributions to the public good.
- The Indian government honoured him with the country's highest civilian award – the **Bharat Ratna, in 1955.**