

## **CHAPTER-VIII**

# **WITHER DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION IN SIKKIM: A CONCLUDING OBSERVATION**

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Development administration, in so far as the development of administration is concerned, it is not a new thing like any other democratic country. From the year 1648 to present day the administration in Sikkim has to complete a long journey from a Monarchical State under the rule of Maharaja who used to be called 'Chogyal' to a liberal democratic form of government—from an independent State to a constituent unit of India. From a fully centralised form of administration gradually Sikkim is experiencing a decentralised administration.

Until the emergence of liberal democracy, the politics in Sikkim was undemocratic, non-participatory, centralised, and authoritarian (Yasin, 2012). However, it is to be noted that the experience of democracy is not a new thing in Sikkim. The emergence of new democracy as an alternative political model in Sikkim can be traced to the reformist movements of early 1940s. The urge for democracy derived from the people in Sikkim themselves. The Chogyal also gradually reformed himself and allowed to introduce democratic institutions.

The 1953 Proclamation provided for a State Council that was to be constituted of –a) A President who shall be nominated and appointed by Maharaja; b) Twelve elected members, of whom six should be either Sikkim Bhutia, or Lepcha and the remaining six should be Sikkim Nepalese, and c) five members should be nominated by His Highness the Maharaja in his discretion (Clause 3, Proclamation of His Highness Maharaja of Sikkim, 1953).

If we consider the voting procedure to decide on a question at any sitting of a State Council, the said Proclamation provides that the question will be decided by a majority of votes of the members present and voting other than the President or person acting as such. However, the President or the person acting as President had a casting vote (Clause 11, Proclamation of His Highness Maharaja of Sikkim). So, it can be said that the disputes, after the introduction of State Council under 1953 Proclamation, was to be resolved by representatives of the people. However, quite naturally, there were some exceptions. The Civil List, including the expenditure on the household department of Maharaja; pay and allowance of the Dewan, the judiciary and officers on deputation from the government of India; and secret and discretionary expenditure were not the subject to vote of the State Council. This arrangement reflects the kind of partial democracy—democracy in spirit but not in content.

Sikkim had experienced its first election in the year 1953. With the introduction of this electoral politics, though in a limited sense of term, the administration of Sikkim becomes from a non-participatory to a participatory one.

It was the misfortune of the Sikkim Chogyals that they never could be able to carry out their rule in an authoritative way. This small tiny Himalayan State had to depend on foreign power for its existence right from its inception. Initially it had to depend on Tibet. It was invaded by several foreign powers from time to time. Afterwards it came into contact with the British power in India. And during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it became the Protectorate of the British in India. (Bhaumik & Bhattacharyya, 1977)

An attempt to introduce a decentralised administration was also seen even during the rule of the first recorded Chogyal in Sikkim, Phuntsog Namgyal. He

divided his kingdom into twelve Dzongs. However, during that period it was more delegation of authority than decentralisation in its true sense of term. But the administration was never totally centralised one. In some areas like Lachen and Lachung there was the existence of local self-government.

Despite the introduction of participatory democracy and presence of decentralised administration, however, in a limited sense of term, there was a demand, on the part of the political parties in Sikkim, for a more democracy in administration (Sengupta, 1985). It was quite natural efforts on the part of the then Chogyal, Palden Thondup Namgyal, to protect the identity of the State. B. S. Das (1983) opined that merger of Sikkim with India was inevitable, but it could be avoided if the Chogyal could manage it diplomatically. But the fact is that Sikkim had nothing to do without merging with India. Keeping all these facts in mind the present study makes an attempt to summarise the findings of the field study and to conclude on it.

In the previous chapters it has been analysed that in Sikkim there was the existence of the administrative units in their various forms. However, the districts in Sikkim, as they stand today, are nothing but a replica of the British set-up. Being a protectorate of the British power in India Sikkim was under the direct supervision of the Britishers. And ultimately when it merged with India the administrative set-up, as it is in India, is to be introduced in Sikkim also. The district in India is a British legacy. It was formed as well as reformed by the British power in India. Initially, the set-up of District Administration was imposed in India for the administrative convenience of the British ruler.

However, after independence, the administrative set up at the district level has travelled a long path. From a regulatory administration it transformed into a development oriented administration. The district collector was the master within the territory of the districts and with the introduction of the

concept of development administration he has become the servant of the people within the district. So, now the district in India today and as it is in Sikkim is not the replica of the British set-up.

An important fact about the district level is that the district is simply an entity with purely administrative rationale. It has often come into being by custom and usage or sentiment rather than by eco-economic logic (Rajan, 1990). In Sikkim, also, the districts were created by the Chogyal for administrative convenience. So, it can be opined that while creating the districts, the “Theory of Local Finality” was not followed.

The present study also tries to find out whether the decentralised system of administration in Sikkim is helpful to reach the desirable degree of good governance. Professor Bhattacharyya has identified three aspects of good governance—a) the form of political regime (parliamentary or presidential, military or civilian, and authoritarian or democratic); b) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources; and c) the capacity of governments to design, formulate and implement policies, and in general, to discharge government functions. According to the generic meaning of good governance (Bhattacharyya, 1999) it ensures people-driven development and it denotes governance without government.

If we look at Sikkim, the field survey reveals that the prevailing decentralised system can reach a moderate level of good governance. The majority of the respondents among the citizens as well as the politicians admit that the administrators have nothing to do with the selection of beneficiaries of the prevailing development programmes. They are selected by the Gram Sabhas. However, majority of the respondents among the citizens (64.16%) opined that they solve their problem, to some extent, through the PRIs. And

quite naturally, the majority of the politician respondents (51.43%) are of the opinion that the people's problems are solved mostly through the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

So, one may hold that even if the Panchayats in Sikkim can be able to get rid of the bureaucratic red-tapism in case of selection of beneficiaries the common people are not totally satisfied with the performance of the Panchayats. They do not get proper service from the Panchayats and that is why they cannot solve their problems through the Panchayats. It means that they had to go to other institution or persons to get their problem solved- it may be to the bureaucrats or to the politicians at the district level. And when the people cannot get the service from the institutions that supposed to serve them, transparency in the process of administration is questioned. Otherwise it may appear that the accountability on the part of the administrator-both of the political administrators and of the bureaucrats becomes questionable.

If we consider good governance as governance without government, it is yet to be actualised in Sikkim. The government is very much present in the governing process in Sikkim. Consequently, the district level officials are not only, playing role but also are expected to play positive role, in the implementation of the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). They are expected to be motivated and committed to the process of implementation of the Rural Development Programmes. The citizen respondents accused the administrator that they are to some extent lack motivation and commitment to implement the Rural Development Programmes. They are more interested in the fulfilment of the goals than that of the proper development of the common people. The citizen respondents accused the officials that they are, to some extent lacked motivation and commitment to implement the Rural Development Programmes.

So far as the political interference is concerned 50% of the respondents among the citizens are of the opinion that the Panchayats act, to some extent, according to the influentials and the party leaders. Quite surprisingly, a major portion of the respondent among the politicians also opined that the Panchayats act according to the influentials and party leaders. This tendency can be explained through the analysis of political holds of the existing political parties in the state.

If we have a look into the distribution of Assembly seats in Sikkim, it can be noticed that there is always a tilt towards one- party domination in Sikkim. In the first Assembly elections in Sikkim the Congress Party got an overwhelming majority in the house. Out of 32 seats, the Congress Party won in 30 seats. It is only in the second Assembly elections we can notice the presence of opposition in Sikkim. In that election Sikkim Janata Parishad had the majority with 16 seats, Sikkim Congress Revolutionary in 11 seats, Sikkim Projatantra Congress in 4 seats and independent in 1 seat. In the third Assembly election Sikkim Sangram Parishad had a majority over 30 seats and in the next election Sikkim Sangram Parishad practically washed out the opposition wining all the 32 seats in the house. In the fifth Assembly election Sikkim democratic registered their victory for the first time in the electoral history in Sikkim. In that election Sikkim Sangram Parishad got 27 seats in the house (Shresta, 2005). And the history repeats itself till date.

So, one can easily find out a tendency, on the part of the administrators to be obedient to the guidelines of the majority party in power. Consequently, the administrators may engage themselves more in achieving the targets set by the political leaders than in rendering service to the people. However, it is to be mentioned that this tendency is not a unique feature of Sikkim. In every State where parliamentary form of government is there, especially in the third world

countries, if one- party domination is there, politicisation of bureaucracy can be seen there.

After having the view of the citizens and the politicians that the administrators are to some extent lack motivation and commitment in implementing the Rural Development Programmes and they are not fully satisfied with the working of the Rural Development Programmes, the present study intend to have the opinion of the officials regarding the fact. They were asked to express their opinion on the problem of relative dissatisfaction of the people about the working of the Rural Development Programmes.

The administrators express their adverse opinion to the politicians of the state. They are of the opinion that political pulls and pressures are responsible for the negative performance of the Rural Development Programmes. And at the same time, quite naturally, they denied the presence of defective interdepartmental co-ordination as a reason of the unsatisfactory result of the Rural Development Programmes.

The administrators are more diplomatic in answering the questions. They intend to shift the responsibility for slowing down the implementation of the development programmes from their own ends. They identify the defective planning of work programmes and insufficiency in regular machinery to assess the achievements and shortfalls of the performance of the Rural Development Programmes. However, at the same time, they opine that the rigidity in administrative procedure is also play a vital role in the poor performance of the Rural Development Programmes. But they certify the common people that they are not less interested in the participation in the process of planning as well as implementing the Rural Development Programmes.

Therefore, one can easily opine that participation as one of the measures of good governance is unquestionably present in Sikkim. The administration is

also legitimised there. Keeping in mind all these factor and forces it can well be said that the present decentralised system of administration is able to achieve a moderate degree of good governance.

Finally, the study makes an attempt to find out the impact of democracy, development and decentralisation on the district level administration in Sikkim. In the previous chapters of this study it has been shown that how a fully monarchical and more or less centralised administration has transformed into a democratic decentralised pro-people development oriented administration. With the advent of democracy in Sikkim, the monarchical form of government has transformed into a parliamentary form of government with the popularly elected political executive. In Sikkim the demand for democracy has been urged from the people themselves. So, after 1975, the administration in Sikkim both at the state and the district level is becoming more and more participatory. The field study also reveals that the people are interested in participating in the process of planning and implementation of the rural development programmes.

The concept of decentralisation is not a new thing in the administration in Sikkim. Decentralised administration in Sikkim has its origin in the formation of Dzons. The history of Sikkim experienced elected representatives in the local self-government at the villages Lachen and Lachung. The new thing that is introduced with advent of the concept of decentralisation is that it has brought a tremendous change in the administrative set-up at the district level. With the introduction of the Constitutionalised Panchatati Raj Institutions the role of the District Collector has gone through a sea-change. The chairman of the Zilla Panchayat being a popular representative enjoys equal prestige with that of the District Collectors. The functions relating to plan formulation and plan implementation transfer to the village panchayats. The beneficiaries of the rural development programmes are selected through the Gram Sabhas. The District Collector who was previously entrusted with maintaining law and order within

his jurisdiction becomes the 'and' functionary between and among various departments at the district level.

With the introduction of economic reforms the District Officers are to be sensitised to the implications and relevance of the reforms to their functioning. It is necessary to understand, for the district officer, the overall context of these reforms and the impact on the poor at present and is likely to do so in the future (Katoch, 1995).

Having all these points as the summery of the findings the present research work tries to offer some suggestions to establish a more responsive administration at the district level of the state of Sikkim.

- ❖ The people should be aware to a greater extent to give a constant vigil to the working of the Rural Development Programmes because the people are the best evaluator of the performance of the administration.
- ❖ The politicians should not interfere in the administrative process and should allow the local self governments to act more autonomously.
- ❖ A considerable degree of good governance can only be achieved only when proper decentralisation has been implemented, so the Panchayats should be given more authority to decide over the matters independently.
- ❖ Since Sikkim is a hilly state without a piece of plane land the means of communication is to be developed more. Infrastructural developments as well as capacity building programmes are to be initiated to a greater extent.
- ❖ Provisions are to be introduced to make the administration more accountable and more transparent.

- ❖ Single window system is to be introduced to avoid the unnecessary harassment of the common people.
- ❖ The attitudes of the administrators should be more pro-people.
- ❖ Administration should be more flexible in order to meet the needs of the present society. E-governance should be introduced for the prompt action of the government.
- ❖ Measures should be taken to overcome the defects in the plan formulation and implementation.
- ❖ Administrative machinery should be introduced to assess the achievements and shortfalls of the rural development programmes.
- ❖ People should participate more in the working of the local self government.

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