

CHAPTER-I

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1.1 Introduction

Panchayati Raj institutions symbolise an important vehicle for the dynamics of development at the rural level. It is now generally admitted and recognised that the entire panorama of local administration and local self-government, including district administration and Panchayati Raj administration, has undergone a sea-change with the attainment of independence, emergence of planning for economic development and the introduction of development administration. Prior to independence, the system was essentially bureaucratic, built up to fulfil system-maintenance goals. Now the focus has shifted from a regulatory-cum-revenue administration in a basically feudal society and stagnant economy to a welfare and development administration in a democratic society. Attention is now directed to nation-building activities and the centre of gravity has moved to the rural areas. While district administration continues to be basically hierarchical in its structural pattern and functional orientation, the new Panchayati Raj institutions in West Bengal, introduced after the Panchayat election of 1978 with a revitalised and reoriented programme for integrated rural development and social change through direct popular participation in programme planning, policy

formulation and implementation, have been organically integrated into a neat pattern, with emphasis on coordination, communication and integration. This new Panchayati Raj has assumed the role of socio-economic transformation of the rural people through 'Land Reforms', 'Operation Barga', IRDP, NREP, RLEGP, etc. The idea of participatory democracy emerged in the field of Panchayati Raj with the active involvement of the people in the decision-making process in the formulation and implementation of development programmes. Democratic decentralisation - both political and administrative - is now crystallizing into a living reality.

1.2 Objectives of the Study :

The primary objective of this dissertation is to study the interaction and emerging relationship patterns between the 'Officials' (District Magistrate or Collector, Senior West Bengal Civil Service Officer, B.D.O., Extension Officer Panchayat, Secretaries of Gram Panchayats) and the 'Non-Officials' (Sabhadhipati, Sahakari Sabhadhipati, Elected Members of the Zilla Parishad, Sabhapati, Sahakari Sabhapati, Elected Members of the Panchayat Samitis, Prodhan, Upa Prodhan, Elected Members of the Gram Panchayats) at the three levels of Panchayati Raj institutions in the Malda district. A secondary objective is to assess the role and performance of the elected Panchayat members and the officials in implementing rural development plans and programmes at the three levels, to locate the deficiencies and shortfalls in performance and to find out a linkage, if at all,

between the relationship patterns and the performance-gaps.

Another objective of this study is to make a historical survey of the structure and functions of the Panchayati Raj institutions to understand the nature of relationship that prevailed before the introduction of the new system of Panchayati Raj institutions.

1.3 Significance of the Study :

In order to assess the working of the Panchayati Raj institutions, it is necessary to study the opposite sets of actors at the three-levels as a whole.

Since the authority, power and responsibility have now been shifted from the officials to elected representatives of the people, it is of great significance and interest now to study the relations between them in a changing socio-economic and political-ideological climate. Results obtained from such micro-level empirical research might help the concerned authorities to bring about the desired improvement in the working of the Panchayats.

Panchayats are entrusted with comprehensive developmental activities. It is here that the policies end, actions begin, facts for policy formulation are collected, and law and order maintained. It is at this stage the officials and the non-officials have to come into direct contact with one another. Moreover, there is every possibility of overlapping of functions by both sets of actors. The officials are obliged to give advice

and supply information for policy formulation. The non-officials intend to supervise and guide the implementation procedure. It is, therefore, of interest to examine the relation between the officials and the non-officials in the Panchayati Raj institutions.

1.4 Theoretical Considerations

1.4.1 Concept of Development :

Public administration has been assigned the responsibility of bringing about change in the entire process of rural development. Public administration has now gradually changed its goal from regulatory-cum-revenue administration to committed developmental functions. The word 'development' is a comprehensive concept. Different authors have viewed the word 'development' in different ways. Some refer to it as 'change', some as 'growth' and others as 'change' and 'growth'.¹

Development is above all a human process and not just a mechanical or technological change. Development does not mean merely the construction of physical structures. It does not mean the mere adoption of latest technology. Development either immediately improves the living conditions - social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, etc., or increases the potential for future living, or both.²

In the narrower sense, development is a planned-economic change. In a much broader sense, it embraces all kinds of social,

economic and political change. Development is a dynamic process directed towards transforming the entire society enmeshing together its economic, social, political and administrative aspects for an all-round, balanced, and upward change.³

It is essentially conceived as the process of allowing and encouraging people to meet their own aspirations.⁴ It is a desired or directed change. It is usually conceived as the exploitation and management of the resources of nature in such a way that they are put under the control of man and are harnessed to serve his purpose.⁵ It is a tendency, a direction, a role of change in a particular direction.⁶

The twin goals of development administration are nation-building and socio-economic progress. The goals of development consist in the enrichment of total quality of life and its availability to all sections of the population.⁷

Development is not merely the achievement of goals it is also an element of stability and resilience to meet the requirements of future developmental challenges. The main functions of development administration are planning, policies, programmes, projects and other activities in respect of goals and objectives.³

1.4.2 Rural Development : its nature

India is basically rural-India. More than eighty percent of the population live in the rural areas. Indian economy is

mostly agrarian economy. So the thrust for rural development lies in effort towards national development. The goals, values and strategies of development may vary but there is a common process to all kinds of development. India's development specifically signifies the diversification of rural development programmes.

Rural development implies the all round development of the village that culminates in the socio-economic transformation of the rural people. Rural development is considered a process leading to maximizing production in (1) agriculture and allied activities (2) rural income, (3) rural welfare in terms of health nutrition, education, equality, employment and rural-urban differential⁹ and (4) development of rural industries with emphasis on village and cottage industries, generating maximum possible employment opportunities in rural areas specifically for the weaker sections of the community so as to enable them to improve their standard of living, providing basic services like drinking water, communication facilities etc.¹⁰

Most of the rural people are illiterate and ignorant and, moreover, economically they are not well off. So, the problem is not only that the rural areas were not developed due to lack of transportation and communication but also there is the problem of the development of the rural communities to eradicate poverty and ignorance and to assist in the process of creating self-employment opportunities. To increase the Gross National Product is not to think that the socio-economic position of the rural communities

is raised. The G.N.P. of a country can be raised without affecting the socio-economic conditions of the rural communities. The G.N.P. should be distributed properly so that the socio-economic status of the rural people can be uplifted.¹¹

Integrated Rural Development embraces development of all sectors of the rural economy and all sections of the rural society. The rationale of development of all sectors of the rural economy is that they are inextricably linked with each other. Thus agriculture is linked with allied activities like dairy, poultry, fishing, and piggery, sericulture, sheep farming, forestry etc. and with rural industry.¹²

The economists and other social scientists consider integrated rural development concept as involving a multipronged attack on the problems of rural development. Integration can only mean a process of planning and management which includes all the governmental activities related to the economic and social well being of the rural areas. These are : (1) the concept of overall development of all with a focus on specified target groups; (2) the elaboration of the first concept e.g. spreading of H.Y.V., of dairy cooperatives and special area or target group programmes such as Command Areas, Drought Prone Areas Programme, Small Farmers Development Agency and the like; (3) the economic activities which are inherent in rural development must be integrated for balanced growth. This implies the integration of

Agricultural programmes with village, Cottage and Small Scale Industries Programmes in rural areas for creating organised marketing facilities. Moreover, it is sought to create larger employment opportunities so as to absorb the rural population in the allied activities. The last dimension is the integration of credit disbursing activities under the multi-agency approach : SFDA, DPAP, HYV, etc. Based on these lines integrated development aims at assisting the rural poor.¹³

With a view to implementing Integrated Rural Development Programme the institutions have a significant role to play. Without the effective organisations of rural institutions for implementing the Integrated Rural Development Programme, this will merely remain a paper formula. The Programme for integrated rural development includes wide range of developmental activities related to the economic and social welfare of the people at the rural level. Panchayati Raj institutions are the means to reach that end. So the institutions are inextricably linked with the rural development programme.

In 1960, the Government of India acting on the Congress Party's resolution on Agrarian Organisation adopted at its Nagpur Session in 1959, decided to assign responsibility on two local institutions, namely - Panchayati Raj and Cooperatives for the implementation of rural development programmes. One such institution is 'Panchayati Raj' or 'Rule by Panchayat' which would

serve to raise resources for public works and community development projects as well as assisting extension officers in the spread of new agricultural techniques, health practices and other improvements within the village.¹⁴

The Fifth Five Year Plan stated that "integrated development would be possible only through cooperation and participation of the people. This could be secured by strengthening the Panchayati Raj institutions at various levels. The Block Development Officer was entrusted with the coordination of all the rural development programmes at the block level. The Block Development Officer was assisted by various technical officers and grass root level workers. As a result, a viable infrastructure has been established in the rural areas right from the village level to the district and state levels with a mix of governmental machinery and elected representatives of the people in the form of Panchayati Raj institutions".¹⁵

Rural development is not possible without the effective coordination among the Panchayat bodies. The whole scheme of Panchayati Raj is an integrated concept. One level of operation can not be separated from the other. Sometimes Panchayat Samiti acts as an intermediate linkage between the Gram Panchayats and the Zilla Parishad. The Zilla Parishad supervises and even directs the Gram Panchayats and the Panchayat Samitis and coordinate their activities in implementing rural development

programmes. The Panchayat institutions as a whole remain responsible for the success or failure of the rural programmes.

1.4.3 The meaning of Panchayati Raj :

The term 'Panchayati Raj' indicates a wide range of meaning. Some regard it as an administrative agency for rural development; others as an extension of democracy at the grass-roots level; and still others as a charter of rural local government. The most interesting thing is that these views are more or less synonymous with one another and imply the same significance.¹⁶

The word 'Panchayat' possibly implies the 'council of five'. But there is no such evidence that this number has strictly been followed in future in the composition of Panchayat. The Panchayat is an organisation of people for performing administrative activities and settling judicial disputes.¹⁷ It is the operational unit for popular representation as well as planned development.¹⁸

By Panchayati Raj we mean a statutory multitier institutional structure endowed with a corporate status by a competent legislature performing functions pertaining to local self government as determined from time to time by the legislature and or the Executive at the State or Union levels.¹⁹

Article 40 of the constitution of India is the only reference to village panchayats, "The Panchayat refers to an integrated, interlocking institutions for rural development. It is a closely

knit three tier structures consisting of Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level".

1.4.4 Panchayats and Rural Development :

Since independence, several plans and programmes like Community Development Programme were launched through Panchayati Raj institutions to elevate the socio-economic status of the rural people. But inspite of the successive efforts made by the government little could be achieved. In ancient India the Panchayats did not consist of the rural people and these were set up mainly to collect cess and to serve the interests of rulers. Panchayat members were so long placed at the disposal of the officials. There was a lack of meaningful cooperation between the Panchayat members and the officials.

Now, the Panchayati Raj institutions have appeared at the rural level with a new outlook and objectives to bring about all round development of the village. Now, it is an integrated agency as mentioned earlier.

The organisational structure of Panchayati Raj institutions has undergone a fundamental change with the implementation of Panchayat Act, 1973, the 4th June, 1973 in West Bengal. This structural change has been accompanied by a corresponding change in the functional content and role performance of the Panchayati

Raj institutions. The Asoka Mehta Committee envisaged two types of committed participants for socio-economic transformation of the rural people at the district, block and village levels. Now the Government officials are subordinate to the non-official personnel of the Panchayati Raj institutions. Thus, the powers traditionally enjoyed by the officials were given a jolt and the political development is achieved through the democratic decentralisation of power.

With the introduction of this new set up of Panchayati Raj institutions two different sets of actors - 'officials' and 'non-officials' emerged and the relationship between the officials and the non-officials assumed a recurring theme in the literature on Panchayati Raj. The officials and the non-officials who create two parallel lines of an organisation must cooperate with each other in implementing different plans and programmes. The officials who are expected to be sensitive to the needs of the people, and the non officials who are in close touch with the people, must function in complete harmony with one another. In practice, it is noticeable that an undercurrent of tension exists between them and this impedes the realisation of the developmental goals. It is assumed then that the relationship between them is significant if the wheels of rural development have to move on.

Some scholars considered that the popularly elected representatives would advise the officials and the officials would undertake the responsibility of executing policy. It is

generally accepted that the politicians cannot remain aloof from policy implementation and on the contrary, officials interfere on policy proposals by raising the question of so many alternatives and consequences.²⁰

One should keep in mind that the framework of minister-civil-servant relationship is not wholly applicable to Panchayati Raj situations. The civil-servants at the Central and State levels perform their duties from a place which is remote from the area of activity. But this is not the case exactly with the officials of the Panchayati Raj institution. Here the officials are persons on the spot. So the relationship between the officials and the non officials at the Panchayat level is face-to-face, direct and open. The actions and attitudes of the officials are conditioned by the political pulls and pressures of the elected non-officials. The officials are obliged to follow the advice of the non-officials. If the officials are not obliging, they will be exposed to the public at the district, block and village levels. So the officials have perforce to become less neutral. They try to make themselves align with a particular group or a Pradhan or a Sabhapati or Sabhadhipati. Only officials of strong nerves can play an important role.²¹

1.4.5 Bureaucracy and Development :

In any system of government, socialist or non-socialist, it is generally accepted that the bureaucrats are assigned

responsibility for implementing developmental plans and programmes. In the developing countries like India bureaucrats are inextricably linked with the implementation of developmental plans and programmes. So it is necessary to explain at the outset what we mean by bureaucracy, what its characteristics and role are, whether the bureaucrats are able to change their attitudes to respond to the new needs and demands of the society.

Peter M. Blau and W. Meyer. Marshall defined bureaucracy as "the type of organisation designed to accomplish large scale administrative tasks by systematically coordinating the work of many individuals".²² Max Weber's classical ideal type of bureaucracy possesses certain characteristics, like hierarchy, differentiation, written rules, rationality, impartiality, closed career system with no lateral entry.²³

From the structural point of view bureaucracy can be defined as rule-oriented, hierarchic and systematic differentiation. These structural characteristics of bureaucracy bring forth certain behavioural characteristics. These are objectivity, discretion and formalism for the achievement of certain determined goal.²⁴

The bureaucrat must be neutral and the behaviour of bureaucrat may be hindered by 'pathological' and 'dysfunctional' factors.²⁵ Indian bureaucracy possesses certain dysfunctional characteristics. These are - impersonality and frustration, communication gap between higher and lower levels of bureaucracy,

lack of initiative, responsibility and challenge; reluctance to delegate authority, sychophancy towards superiors, hostility among different professions, insistence on status and prestige symbols, a tendency to overstaff, politicisation, non-responsive to public grievances.

The Weberian model of bureaucracy has been criticised because the bureaucrats are not development-oriented. The 'ideal type of bureaucrats' being a product of particular historical, political and social environment, do not take any risk and initiative even when the situation and environment so demands. They remain passive and neutral.²⁶

In order to be an agent of change, a bureaucratic system must have the capacity to (a) forecast, project and understand direction and tempo of major or significant changes in the environment, (b) to plan for necessary or desirable changes, (c) to adapt itself to changes demanded or planned by the political system, or to other unforeseen changes, (d) and innovate on its own.²⁷

1.4.6 Interacting Situations Under Panchayati Raj :

During the colonial period, the administrators were bound by colonial rules and performed their functions in order to safeguard the interests of the colonial regime. There was a near-total absence of a tradition of accountability to indigenous political representatives. The ideas, attitudes and values of the administrators were paternalistic. The philosophy was to rule rather

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than to serve. All these characteristics have affected the administrative system. The administrators belonged to the establishment category and political leaders to the hostile group. None of them allowed each other to work together, appreciate each others' role and understand constraints under which each of them functioned.²⁸

During the British period, the tension between the administrators and the political leaders could be accounted for on the following grounds. The political leaders thought that the administrators served the interest of the British-rulers as if they were the representatives of the same. On the other hand, the administrators should perform those activities which would help them to secure the support of the people in the election. Even after independence, the relations between administrators and political leaders were based on mutuality of distrust and hostility.²⁹ The coming of independence required that both the officials and the non-officials should change their attitudes, orientations and behaviours. The officials should abandon their earlier attitudes towards the people and the non-officials. On the other hand, the non officials should abandon the idea of agitation, demonstration and hostility towards the officials and play the role as the gurdian of political authority and authoritatively allocate the democratic values.³⁰

Under the parliamentary system of government the elected representatives set the goals of administration. So the decisions

for implementing developmental plans and programmes are made within the political context. The process of administrative activities is conditioned by these broad parameters. In the matter of policy formulation, the supreme power rests in the hands of the political leaders. Administrators should cooperate with the political leaders not only for implementing developmental schemes but also in the matter of policy formulation. But, what is noticed actually is that the civil servants do not like to forsake their powers which they had so long enjoyed lavishly. They had always been the superior boss and had directed their subordinates.

The interaction between the administrators and the political leaders can be characterised by position-centric considerations, that is, when the administrators think that they are more important and political leaders should not interfere in the activities of the administration. This prevents them from evolving certain conventions which will allow them to find their relationship on functional considerations and permit them to collaborate in nation building activities. Efforts at better cooperation and coordination are considered essential for the successful implementation of developmental plans and programmes. Dominance on the part of any of the groups destroys both the objectives and goals of the organisation. Balanced relations require that decision making authority as well as the responsibility for policy implementation be shared.³¹ Many authors have suggested that the roles should be clearly defined.³² If the

roles are clearly demarcated the possibility of anonymity and interference either by administrators or by political leaders will not arise. Others have suggested that personal attitudes and behaviour of the administrators and political leaders have to be adjusted and moulded with the changing structures and environment.³³ It is also considered necessary to create an atmosphere to show mutual regard and mutual respect for each other. Both the officials and the non-officials are complementary and supplementary to each other and one can not do without the other. The cultivation of this spirit and atmosphere is sine-qua-non for the success of the programme of Panchayati Raj.³⁴ Writing on 'Non-official-Official Relationships in Panchayati Raj', one would suggest the following guidelines for the maintenance of harmonious relationship between the officials and the non-officials. These are -

- (1) The non-officials are supreme in respect of policy formulation and policy implementation directives.
- (2) The chief executive should represent a parallel to the political chief executive.
- (3) Actual implementation of policy should remain exclusively to the chief executive.
- (4) Both technical and non-technical staff should be exclusively controlled by the chief executive.

- (5) The service-condition of the chief executive should be properly safeguarded.
- (6) The Panchayati Raj institutions should have the power to seek transfer of the chief executive in case he fails to oblige.
- (7) The chief executive should be recruited from the Central or State Administrative cadres.³⁵

The Committee on Plan Projects pointed out that imbalances in the relations between the officials and the non-officials are bound to arise in the transitional period. It further mentioned that "the administrative difficulties between officials and non officials might arise if personal motivations, lust for power, individual local interests, notion of false prestige, absence of clear cut demarcation of duties and responsibilities among various components of administrative organisation are introduced in the working of the Panchayati Raj". The Committee mentioned that in Rajasthan strenuous relation between the B.D.O and the Prodhan of the Panchayat Samiti existed. Again, it observed that in other states also there might be such tensions at different levels.³⁶

The Ram Murti Committee, the Darji Committee and the Narisimham Committee observed that involvement of elected representatives with selections, postings, transfers, promotion or disciplinary action over the officials is one of the main causes

of friction between the officials and the non-officials at the block level".³⁷

One would classify the sources of tension between the officials and the non officials into three categories :- Group situation - instability among the majority groups, dissonance between power groups, sharp differences among the local leaders, higher tiers and state administration heterogeneity in the official team.

Decisional Sources - raising and allocation of resources or other amenities or administrative matters.

Personality and Value Orientation of the Actors - previous experience of successful working, ambiguous political situation gave rise to confidence and security, officials' adherence to rules and rights of supra-local bodies might be difficult to reconcile.³⁸

Tension between the officials and the non officials is created by factionalism and the poor quality of Panchayat members.³⁹ Factional fights within the non officials and other groups often blame the officials for siding with a group. Besides this, the official wants to utilise this factional fights among the non-officials and often excoriates the national objectives.⁴⁰

Since the officials are educated, experienced, possess knowledge and tact in administrative affairs, they do not want to submit themselves to the political leaders who even till yesterday

led agitation and demonstration against him. On the contrary, non officials feel that they are superior boss because they are representatives of the people. When the non-officials take decisions rapidly and accomplish many functions the officials view it as hasty. Moreover, when the non-officials do something for the benefit of the people the officials react by saying that these are done for the benefit of their partymen. When the officials claim superior to non-officials, the non-officials put their argument by saying that they are superior because the streets, ponds, buildings of village and also the men who reside in the village are wellknown to them.⁴¹

It is difficult for the officials to change their attitudes overnight. With the emergence of non officials as the real powerholder in the matter of policy formulation the officials behave with a sense of injured pride or loss of power, status and prestige. Moreover, the officials consider all these political changes as a threat to their identity and look upon the role of the non-officials as their strong opponent. It is obvious that this will raise more and more tension between the two wings of Panchayati Raj institutions and resultantly noticed lack of meaningful cooperation between them.⁴²

There are so many areas where the administrators and political leaders interact on and influence the behaviour of each other. The political leaders have the power to make policies and programmes and the administrators for implementing and executing

policies. But, in some cases it is found that the administrators are to come forward to assist political leaders in framing policies. The political leaders, in turn, also become interested in policy implementation. In implementing policies the behaviour of bureaucrat is very much influenced by the political leaders and sometimes the bureaucrats are to submit to the pressures created by the political leaders and modify or change programmatic strategy. On the other hand, in the matter of policy formulation the bureaucrats influence the behaviour of political leader by providing information and pinpointing programmatic restraints associated with each of the policy alternatives.⁴³

Again, tension may arise between the officials and the non-officials in the operative field regarding the distribution of cement, fertilisers, seeds, loans etc., appointments, transfers, promotions of staff working under the Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti, Gram Panchayat, suggestions given by office bearers to make adjustments in existing policies for expediting the development work.

The officials refuse to offer any cooperation with the non-officials in framing programme also for the reason is that the officials are now kept aloof from their contact with the masses which was earlier the regular functions of the officials.

"The problem of harmonious relation between the officials and the non-officials of Panchayati Raj institutions is not

peculiar to Indian situation only even in America this problem is not uncommon. The major sources of conflict between the Councilmen and the Manager could be grouped under six categories (1) power prerogatives (2) personality clashes (3) political setting (4) adherence to policy versus expenditure (5) Manager's inflexibility and rectitude and communication and cognition."⁴⁴

The role of officials and non-officials at the three levels of Panchayati Raj is important for implementing rural development plans and programmes. Since this is a relationship study, our main thrust will be to analyse those functions and roles - officials' and non-officials' : norms and role, reciprocal role-perception, their behaviours at the three levels which will help us to identify the relationship between them. It is generally admitted that the official adheres to rules and regulations in all cases and the non-officials are democratic oriented. Since the individual's commitment to orientations differ due to value preferences and the environmental settings it may happen that some leaders have undemocratic orientations. In that case officials are bound to be pressurized to do certain act which they do not want to do and thus emerges tension between them. On the other hand, officials do not want to sacrifice their rules even when greater interest can be fulfilled. Images and reciprocal role-perception of both the officials and the non-officials are important to determine the relation between them. If there arises a wide gap of the image officials have of the non-officials and

vice-versa, conflict and tension will emerge between them. A certain set of standards of behaviour is also considered important to analyse the pattern of relationship between the officials and the non-officials at the three levels of Panchayati Raj institutions. That is both interact in concrete situations and their relationship is also influenced by the kinds of problems and demands non-officials put on officials, the pressures and the way officials respond and react to non-officials' demands and pressures.

1.5 Research Questions

Viewing in the above perspective, the present study seeks to find answers to the following research questions.

- (1) What was the relation between the officials and the non-officials before the introduction and implementation of the Panchayat Act, 1973 at all levels ?
- (2) What is the present pattern of relationship between the officials and the non-officials at each of the three tiers of Panchayati Raj in West Bengal after the implementation of the Panchayat Act, 1973 ?
- (3) How far have the Panchayati Raj institutions succeeded in implementing rural development programmes ?
- (4) How far have the activities of other agencies for rural development, apart from Panchayati Raj institutions, affected the socio-economic life of the rural people ?

- (5) Do the officials strictly adhere to administrative rules and regulations in the matter of implementing any programme ?
- (6) Are the officials concerned with merely improving their own prospects, even by neglecting the developmental programmes ?
- (7) How far do the officials feel obliged to carry out decision made by elected bodies ?
- (8) To what extent are the officials responsive to the expectations and demands of the non-officials ?
- (9) Do the values of the non-officials conform to the values of Panchayat organizational set up ?
- (10) Are the non-officials oriented towards general interest or parochial, particularistic or partisan interest ?
- (11) Do the non-officials feel obliged to implement the demands and expectations of their constituents ?
- (12) How far do the non-officials cooperate with officials in carrying out government programmes ?
- (13) What is the extent of agreement or differences of opinion between the officials and the non-officials ?
- (14) What kind of images do the officials have of the non-officials, and vice-versa ?

- (15) How much of agreement or disagreement is discernible between the officials and non-officials on the distribution of decisional areas concerning both ?
- (16) How often do officials seek cooperation of the non-officials ?
- (17) How often do non-officials consult officials ?
- (18) How often do non-officials create pressures upon the officials for furthering parochial interests ?
- (19) How often do officials submit to the pressures created by the non-officials ?
- (20) Do the bureaucrats behave with a sense of injured pride or loss of power, status and prestige on account of increasing participation and domination of political leaders in the decision-making process ?

.6 An Overview of Literature

.1 Introduction :

It must be pointed out at the outset that the literature probing the present subject of study, available in India, is rather scanty. An attempt has been made in the States other than West Bengal to investigate the problems of relationship-pattern between the officials and the non-officials in the Panchayati Raj

institutions. In North Bengal, the remotest part of West Bengal, no study has been undertaken so far on the specific issue. Barring a few articles in the journal and some manuals and guide-books and committee reports at the All India Level, no literature on the subject under considerations available to find out the relationship pattern at the three levels of Panchayati Raj institutions in the Malda district. There are, of course, good many standard books and papers on the historical evolution and theoretical concepts as well as on the problems of structure, functions, control and supervision of the Panchayati Raj institutions in India and in the States like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Bihar. Very few studies made so far, have thrown light on the origin, development, nature, structure and functions of West Bengal Panchayati Raj institutions. Hence, the present author had to depend heavily upon fresh and updated official data and field-data gathered from interviews with selected respondents, and these had to be fitted into the conceptual frame work and the available Indian and State-models. While the theoretical and Indian literature were of immense help, the absence of any substantive material on the specific problems of investigation proved to be a great handicap. It is, therefore, reasonably clear that the present work has been in a realistic sense a new, and original enterprise in an uncharted field. A perusal of the literature scanned for the purpose of this research will establish this point.

For the sake of convenience, the available literature can be classified into five categories, namely, Overview of literature relating to (1) Development Administration Theory; (2) Rural Development Theory; (3) Panchayati Raj in India (in the historical perspective); (4) Panchayati Raj in West Bengal (both historical and contemporary perspective); (5) Official-Non-Official Relationship in the Panchayati Raj institution (India & West Bengal).

6.2 Overview of literature relating to Development Administration - Theory :

Birkeshwar Prasad Singh and Sakendra Prasad Singh in their paper, "Development Administration in India : Some Essential Pre-requisites", Subhas Chandra Misra in his article, "Development Administration in India"; and Dr. G.Hargopal in his article entitled, "Development Administration : The Need for a New Conceptual Framework", in the book entitled Dimensions of Development Administration in India⁴⁵ explain the meaning, context, crisis, agencies of change as well as emphasize that non-Western views are more relevant for the developing nations.

J.N.Khosla in his article, "Development Administration : New Dimensions", V.A.Pai Panandikar in his paper, "Development Administration : An Approach", W.Wood in his article, "Development Administration : An Objection" in the volume : Development Administration⁴⁶ interpret the meaning, concept, problems, distinction between the traditional public administration and

development administration. Moreover W. Wood objects to make any distinction between the traditional and development administration. Bata, K.Dey in the article entitled, "Bureaucracy and Development : Some Reflections", R.N.Haldipur in his article, "Bureaucracy's Response to New Challenges", in the same volume,⁴⁷ point out the structural characteristics of bureaucrats and emphasize the need to change the attitudes of bureaucrats to bring about development. A.Y.Darshankar in his paper, "Bureaucracy and Development Administration", in the book, "Dimensions of Development Administration in India",⁴⁸ already referred to, takes the similar view.

6.3 Overview of literature relating to Rural Development Theory :

M.G.Shah under the heading, "Restructuring of Rural Development Administration"; Iqbal Narain and P.C.Mathur in their article, "Urban Development and Re-vitalisation of Local Self-Government Institutions : A Conceptual Analysis in the context of Some Lessons from Anti-Poverty Rural Development Programmes and Policies in India", Ashok Subramanian in the article, "Issues in Managing Republication in Development Programmes", Madhukar Gupta in his paper, "Integrated Rural Development Programme - A Dilemma" in the volume Rural Development : Some Themes and Dimensions⁴⁹ discuss the issues relating to administrative, organisational and managerial aspects of rural development in our country. Their contention is that restructuring, changes and

improvements are necessary for the administration of rural development programmes and also for horizontal and vertical coordination. H.K.Asmerom in the article, " Development Administration and Rural Development Strategy in Kenya : A Review of its Special Rural Development Programmes", Madhab Prasad Poudyal in his article, "Administrative Hurdles to poverty Eradication : Nepal's experiences with Integrated Rural Development Projects" in the volume Rural Development : Some Themes and Dimensions,⁵⁰ present a comparative insight into the operationalisation of rural development policy and strategy in the light of the experience of two other developing countries. S.R.Maheswari in his article, "Rural Development and Bureaucracy in India", in the volume "Rural Development : Some Themes and Dimensions",⁵¹ pleads for administrative decentralisation for effective implementation of India's rural development programmes. Dr. Bindeswari Jha in the article entitled, "Rural Development Administration in India : A Case for People's Participation", Biswanath Singh in his paper, "Development Administration in India : The Rural Perspective" in the book Dimensions of Development Administration in India⁵² pleads for effective popular participation of the people in the implementation of rural development programmes.

6.4 Overview of literature relating to Panchayati Raj in India (in the historical perspective) :

A.S.Altekar in his book State and Govt. in Ancient India⁵³ has discussed the evolution of village council which gradually

appeared in the Gupta Period. Prof. H.D.Malavia in his book Village Panchayats in India⁵⁴ has indicated that Union Panchayat in Madras and Bengal had been set up in 1884. The Congress in its Lahore Session in 1909 had urged the govt. to make rural local bodies elective with elected non-official chairman.

The Volume VI of Cambridge History of India⁵⁵ presents a description of the functionaries of the village panchayat and their functions. The Chief functionaries had been the headman, the accountant, the watchman, the priest and the schoolmaster. The village council or village panchayat had been empowered to deal with the internal affairs of the village. Moreover, it had also the functions of relief-work. This volume also describes Lord Ripon's Resolution of May 18, 1882.

The book on The Struggle For Empire⁵⁶ edited by R.C.Mazumder and A.D.Pusalkar has discussed the nature, structure, functions, eligibility and disqualification of the members of the village assembly.

Prof. M.Shiviah, K.V.Narayana Rao, L.S.N.Murty, G.Mallikarjuniah, in their book, Panchayati Raj - An Analytical Survey⁵⁷ have described in detail the nature, structure, powers and functions of the Panchayati Raj institutions in India since the period of Rig Veda to the enactment of the Report of Balvantray Mehta in Independent India. They point out that Panchayati Raj institution is an important contribution for bridging the gap between the modern political super structure and a traditional social base.

Iqbal Narain, Sushil Kumar, P.C.Mathur and Associates in their book Panchayati Raj Administration - Old Controls and New Challenges⁵³ have attempted to make a comparative study of the pattern and supervision of control over the Panchayati Raj institutions of Madras, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

In the book Patterns of Panchayati Raj in India⁵⁹ edited by G.Ram.Reddy, Mohit Bhattacharjee has discussed in brief the structures, powers and functions of the West Bengal Panchayati Raj institutions before the 1973 Act. S.Bhatnagar's Rural Local Government in India⁶⁰ is an historical account of the nature, structure and diverse patterns of Panchayati Raj institutions in India. He also pointed out structural inadequacy as one of the important reason for the failure of the panchayat institutions.

In an article entitled, "Some Recent Trends in Panchayati Raj in India" Balvantray Mehta in The Indian Journal of Public Administration⁶¹ has pointed out the number of difficulties faced by the Panchayati Raj institutions. He has suggested that the "ideas of directing Panchayati Raj institutions must be replaced by the ideas of guidance and assistance". He has further mentioned that the system of election has an adverse effect on the healthy growth of Panchayats and of public life in this country.

Prof. Henry Maddick in his article on "Control, Supervision and Guidance on Panchayati Raj institutions" in The Indian Journal of Public Administration⁶² has suggested that a system

of education, encouragement and guidance must be evolved to do general development of the system on the one hand and to supervise the technical performance in the fulfilment of various programmes.

Prof. Ensminger in his article, "Democratic Decentralisation: A New Administrative Challenge", in The Indian Journal of Public Administration⁶³ has emphasized that democratic decentralisation is a challenge principally to administrator but to political leaders as well. Myron Weiner in his article, "Political Parties and Panchayati Raj in The Indian Journal of Public Administration⁶⁴ has pointed out that active involvement of political parties is inevitable to local body. R.J.Haldipur in his article entitled "On Re-Modelling Panchayati Raj" in The Indian Journal of Public Administration⁶⁵ points out the super-imposition of the modern concepts of democracy, socialism and secularism on traditional society as the major weakness of Panchayati Raj system. P.C.Mathur in his article, "Re-Modelling Panchayati Raj institutions in India" in The Indian Journal of Public Administration⁶⁶ has emphasized that restructuring of Panchayati Raj systems must start from below and village shall be the primary unit.

The Programme Evaluation Organisation⁶⁷ conducted in 15 evaluation blocks of different states in India has assessed the workings of the Panchayats and their impact on the villages. The Committee on Plan Projects⁶⁸ has explained the role of

panchayat in rural development, recommendations of the Mehta Study Team, preparation and implementation of plan in the Panchayati Raj legislation etc. It also suggests certain remedial measures.

1.6.5 Overview of literature relating to Panchayati Raj institutions in West Bengal (both historical and contemporary perspective) :

Dr. Ashok Mukhopadhyay, in his book, Panchayat Administration in West Bengal⁶⁹ has discussed in detail the theoretical and applied aspects of West Bengal Panchayats. He has mentioned that West Bengal Panchayat Administration has suffered to some extent from structural inadequacies. He has also pointed out that due to lack of financial resources general welfare activities of the rural people have not been carried out.

Dr. Asit Kr. Basu in his book, The West Bengal Panchayat System⁷⁰ (in Bengali) presents an historical account of the evolution of Panchayati Raj since its inception and also lays down the nature, pattern, structures and powers of Panchayati Raj institutions in West Bengal upto 1979. He has pointed out that party basis election in the new Panchayati Raj institutions has increased the political consciousness among the rural masses. He has also indicated the reasons for the failure of the Panchayati Raj system. He has suggested intensive training of the non-officials along with the officials. Again, he has discouraged making the District Magistrate and District

Collector the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad.

M. Shiviah, K.B. Srivastava, A.C. Jena in their book, Panchayati Raj Elections in West Bengal (1978) : A Case Study in Institution Building for Rural Development⁷¹ have discussed the nomination process, election campaign, perceptions about the role of Panchayati Raj institutions in rural development, voting behaviour, sense of political efficacy, the issue of party based contest, aspects of political recruitment and the emerging elite. They have indicated that election has increased the political consciousness among the masses. Again they have mentioned that the effectiveness of Panchayati Raj institutions has been seriously affected on account of financial and other constraints.

Prof. S.N. Ray, in his article, "The New Panchayati Raj Experiment in West Bengal" in the book, New Local Centers in Centralised States,⁷² has presented nicely the emerging pattern, structure and functions of West Bengal Panchayats upto 1981. Prof. Ray has also pointed out that the Left Front Govt. has introduced the party based election and the mechanism of participatory democracy in the new panchayat system even before the Asok Mehta Committee Report. He has also expressed his conviction that this new panchayat system could be a model for the rest of India. Panchayati Raj according to him has achieved success in implementing the assigned programmes, and particularly, in coping with the problems of natural calamities like flood. The author has also pointed out that the new leaders are

capable enough to meet challenges and has indicated positive measures to that end.

1.6.6 Overview of literature relating to Official-Non-Official -Relationship in the Panchayati Raj institutions (India & West Bengal) :

Shanti Kothari and Ramashray Roy⁷³ have made an empirical study in the Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh. They have discussed the normative referents and role, reciprocal images and role-perception and behavioural dimensions and interactions of both the politicians and administrators. They have indicated that strenuous relationships between the administrators and political leaders are due to psychological factors. Both the administrators and the political leaders have shown a very low degree of awareness of systematic goals as their behaviour is characterised by 'position-centred' considerations.

V.Gaikwad⁷⁴ has conducted an empirical study on one Zilla Parishad in Maharashtra. It is an anthropologically oriented study. The study identifies the broad tension areas and the nature of conflicting attitude between the officials and the non-officials. He has made a comparative understanding of the officials and the non-officials. Again he has suggested certain remedial measures for avoiding conflict.

B.S.Bhargava in his book, Politico-Administrative dynamics in Panchayati Raj system⁷⁵ has made an attempt to discuss the

official-non-official relationship at all levels of Panchayati Raj system in one of the district of Rajasthan. He has also mentioned that psychological factors lead to tension between the officials and the non-officials. He considers that both the groups are equally responsible responsible for the prevalence of 'rampant corruption' in the entire system.

James Warner Bjorkman in the book, Politics of Administrative Alienation in India's Rural Development Programmes⁷⁶ has discussed the social characteristics, self images, mutual outlooks of the administrators and political leaders as rural change agents. He has made a comparative study of the administrators and political leaders of Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan at the district and block level.

Kuldeep Mathur⁷⁷ has studied the bureaucratic attitude and behaviour towards development. He has conducted an empirical study and gathered information from 39 B.D.Os. The most interesting aspect of this work is that this is a comparative study. He mentions that B.D.O's commitment to development is weak.

T.N.Chaturvedi, in his paper, "Tensions in Panchayati Raj : Relations between Officials and Non-Officials" in The Economic Weekly⁷³ points out that there exists tension and to remove this tension educational and psychological techniques are to be applied. A.Bhatt has made an attack against T.N.Chaturvedi

through his article, "Tensions in Panchayati Raj" in the same journal⁷⁹ and points out certain reasons for the conflicting relation between the officials and the non-officials in the Panchayati Raj institutions. He indicates that the traditional base of society, lack of essential prerequisites of democracy such as literacy, secularism, political education and democratic experience, are the root cause for the imbalance in relationship between the two wings.

In his reply, T.N.Chaturvedi⁸⁰ points out that apart from 'politics-administration problem', the 'far reaching social changes are also responsible for the tension-based relationship between the officials and the non-officials.

In the, Readings on Panchayati Raj,⁸¹ edited by George Jacob, Iqbal Narain and P.C.Mathur in their article entitled, "Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan - A Case Study in Jaipur district", have mentioned that the balanced relationship has not been developed between the officials and the non-officials and suggests that it depends upon personal equation between Prodhans and Vikas Adhikari.

Dan Fritz in his article, "Evolution of Official and Non-Official roles in Mysore States Panchayati Raj",⁸² has noted certain tension areas between the two sets of actors.

C.P.Bhambri in his article, "Official-Non-Official-Relationship in Panchayati Raj",⁸³ has stressed the need for the proper

role of the officials and the non-officials in the Panchayati Raj institutions.

Dr. C.M.Jain under the heading, "Dynamics of Development Administration : An Enquiry into the Office of Vikas Adhikari",⁸⁴ has indicated that the conflicting relation between Vikas Adhikari and Prodhan is changing slowly through the process of socialisation.

C.P.Bhambri has conducted an empirical survey on, "Officials and Non-Officials in Panchayati Raj : No Short Cut to Harmony",⁸⁵ in Rajasthan at the block level and identified tension areas between the B.D.O and the Prodhan.

Haripad R.Subramoniam Iyer in his article, "Panchayati Raj Administration : Role of Officials and Non-Officials",⁸⁶ has presented the emerging relationship pattern between the officials and the non-officials in Panchayati Raj institution.

Dr. S.C.Jain in his article, "Officials and non-Officials in Panchayati Raj",⁸⁷ has identified the sources of tension areas between the two actors.

Y.B.Damle in his paper, "Bureaucracy and Non-Officials : A Study of Mutual Assessment",⁸⁸ has indicated the nature of interrelationship between the two wings at the block level in the Poona district.

Iqbal Narain in his article, "Democratic Decentralisation :

The Idea, Image and the Reality", in the volume Selected Articles on Panchayati Raj⁸⁹ has explained the term 'Democratic Decentralisation' and points out the weaknesses of the Panchayati Raj system. He has indicated for two main types of reform - 'the need of political self control and administrative innovations'. Shiviah in the article, "Decentralisation and Panchayati Raj",⁹⁰ pleads for autonomous status of both the administrators and political leaders as a necessary component of democratic decentralisation. He points out that decentralisation has a more complex dimension - 'political-cum-administrative'.

S.N.Dubey in his article, "Organisational analysis of Panchayati Raj", in the volume Panchayati Raj⁹¹ points out that the organisational dilemmas of the Panchayati Raj system arise from the nature of relationship among the personnel working at the block level and the Panchayat Samiti. He has also indicated the reasons for the conflicting situations.

H.C.Pande in his article, "Collector and Panchayati Raj", in the volume Panchayati Raj,⁹² has pointed out the reasons for the disharmonious relationship between the officials and the non-officials in the Panchayati Raj institutions. He has further indicated that no amount of statutory rules and regulations are sufficient to create an atmosphere of tension-free relationship between the officials and the non-officials.

Puranik in his empirical study on, "Administration and Politics in the context of Panchayati Raj", at the Taluk level in the State of Maharashtra in the volume Panchayati Raj⁹³ has considered that the relation between the administrators and the political leaders is a major administrative problems. He points out that administrator's concern with rules and regulations and the political-leaders' linkage with political parties adversely affect the over-all tone of administration.

B.Sivaraman in his article, "The Collector and Panchayati Raj", in Kurukshetra⁹⁴ has pointed out that the functions of the collector is to implement the instruction or decisions taken by the non-officials.

From the foregoing discussion it is thus evident that literature on the subject of the present study is not easily available in the context of West Bengal Panchayat system, and virtually non-existent in the specific context of Panchayati Raj institutions of the Malda district. Very few writings on the specific subject of study are available in the all India level as well as in the context of the State other than West Bengal. Therefore, as already pointed out the study had to depend heavily on the officials data and information gathered through interviews of the officials and the non-officials at the three levels of Panchayati Raj institutions in the Malda district and the available all India and other State-models.

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