

# **Chapter - VII**

## EPILOGUE - 1

So far we have tried to build up a theoretical framework within which the district administration operates.

India is organised administratively into union, states, districts, sub divisions, blocks and villages. of these, the basic territorial unit of public administration is the district. It is a multi functional unit of administration.<sup>1</sup>

Changing scenario : The basic form of the district as a unit of administration has a remarkable continuity (see chapter-II) After the dissolution of the Mughal empire, the East India Company created the office of Collector in 1772 and gave more powers them what his counterpart had in Mughal times. The Cornwallis school of district administration was based on a principle of 'checks and balances' and division of powers. It was opposed to concentration of too much authority in the hands of the collector, and believed in anglicizing the indigenous administrative system. The Munro school, on the contrary was impressed by the Mughal tradition of concentration of powers in the hands of one man making him the real ruler of the area in his charge<sup>2</sup>.

The Indian Council's Act of 1861 was followed by the passing of land revenue, and tenancy laws and by the three codes - the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Civil Procedure Code. Act his legislative activity curtailed the executive and discretionary authority of the district officer. The collector, however, continued to be the chief agent of government in his district and also responsible for its law and order and well being.

The constitutional reforms of 1921 placed the control of some department in the hands of Ministers, who are responsible to a council and an elected legislature. This resulted in a further narrowing of the field of activities of the collector and of his influence.

Under the dyarchy a number of matter concerned to district administration were also handed over more fully to the charge of the local institutions of self-government, such as the district boards. In spite of the division of political and administrative powers and responsibilities under dyarchy, the residuary representation, the total presence of government as a whole continued in fact to be contained within the old apparatus of the district administration.

The change brought about by the inauguration of the provincial autonomy was a change in emphasis as to the functions of government. It had been the basic assumption in earlier days that the District officer as the representative of government, had to concentrate on essentials like maintenance of public order, administration of justice, prompt payment of taxes, maintenance of accurate and up-to-date land records, the emphasis now changed to rural development, cooperation, village panchayats etc. With the start of the second world war new dimensions were added to these functions by including activities like recruitment for armed forces, arranging provision of troops, looking after the families of soldiers and sailors, collecting war funds and certain measures of civil defence.

With independence came a sea-change. The role of the administrative system changed in the context of three major factors, namely, democracy, development and decentralisation. The Community Development Programme was introduced in the early fifties and the three-tier panchayati raj in the late fifties and the early sixties - Administration was to carry out the policies and programmes for economic development and social change. This implied transformation not only in the aims of administration but also in its means. The district administrators were no longer the rulers but the servants of the people.

As circumstances changed, the precise nature of the collector's functions, responsibilities and powers also changed. With independence and the consequent changes in the nature of the duties of a district officer relating to development, planning and nation-building activities, the system of administration at the district level faced greater challenges. The district collector would now have to functions within the framework of a parliamentary democratic system and along with local institutions and others which had come into existence in the wake of the adoption of the ideals of a welfare state, democratic decentralisation, and the need for development at the grass root level. Apart from the direct responsibilities, a collector frequently gets involved with the programmes of other department like the PWD, irrigation, power, forest, agriculture, health and family welfare. He has to coordinate their activities and also help them in sorting out their local problems. This role of the collector as a coordinator is becoming increasingly important as well as difficult. In all the states in India, though the collector's role can no longer remain the same with the changes of political forms, it has been accepted that the necessary powers of coordination can best be exercised

only by the collector. This is not only because it is the sphere of a trained and experienced administrator, but also such coordination is possible only if the co-ordinator is respected by those whom he deals with. At present the collector has no alternate in such a choice<sup>3</sup>.

So far as the developmental functions are concerned District Planning Coordination Committee is woven around for better monitoring and coordination of various social and economic programmes and matters of public interest in different districts.

Administrative Decentralisation - Administrative decentralisation meant a devolution of decision making authority from the centre to the provinces, and within a province, from the secretariat to the districts. In the districts themselves it involved a readjustment in the relationship between the officers of general administration and the heads of special departments which had over the years been growing, though slowly, as a result of the state's development activity<sup>4</sup>. Administrative decentralisation is said to sharpen the planner's awareness of developmental problems. It is also said to increase the efficiency of officials at the centre by relieving them of routine decisions.

In order to that the states in different levels of development may move towards decentralisation over a definite period of time, the District Planning Working Group had advocated a progressive or "stages" approach. The stage - 1 will be a phase of "initiation" which will involve inter-alia, establishing planning procedures, desegregating outlays between the state and district sectors, involving criteria for inter-district allocation of plan funds and strengthening of planning capabilities at the district level. Stage - II will be one of "limited Decentralisation", when planning for certain Sectors of activity like MNP, Agriculture and allied activities and all target-group-oriented planning will be brought within the purview of district planning granting extensive delegation of powers to the district level will be specially sought to be achieved during this stage. Finally, Stage - III will encompass planning for all district sector activities. During this stage, a set of wide ranging administrative financial and decision-making powers will develop upon the district and a high level of popular participation will be sought to be achieved<sup>5</sup>.

There has been significant trend towards decentralisation with the introduction of panchayati raj. Since independence, there have been three major phases in the evolution

of Panchayats in India dominated by the Balwantraji Mehta Committee Report in 1950s, the Ashok Mehta Committee Report in 1970s and the Seventy - third Amendment of the constitution in 1990s. (see chapter - IV)

The government of India set up a committee in June, 1986, headed by the constitutional expert Dr.L.M. Singhvi to prepare a concept paper on the revitalisation of the PRIS. The purpose of the paper was to reflect on the process of democratic decentralisation, review the growth and present status and functions of the PRIS and consider the measures required to revitalise these institutions to make them truly effective instruments of self employment in the constructive task of rural development and nation building. (6) Among other things, the committee recommended that local self-government should be constitutionally recognised, protected and preserved by the inclusion of a new chapter in the constitution. It also recommended a constitutional provision to ensure regular, free and fair election for the PRIs and suggested that the task be entrusted to the Election commission of India<sup>7</sup>.

Integrated Area Development - For the purpose of convenience the district may be taken as the regional unit for planning and development. But districts are dissimilar in size and population while some of them are too large some other are too small. They do not always have regional or economic homogeneity: their boundaries do not coincide with natural regions.' Against this, Rural-Urban Relations Committee(1966) remarked "Nevertheless, the committee hopes that following the example of the formulation of blocks, as units of development within the district, the question of readjusting district boundaries in order to make them conform to natural planning units will receive due attention of the state governments, In any case, for administrative convenience the district must be accepted as the regional unit for planning and development for the present<sup>8</sup>.

From the recommendation of the committee it is evident that they have in mind an administrative system which may be called, for lack of better expression, area management. That is to say the entire area should be treated as one unit for administrative purposes and both rural and urban areas falling within it should be treated an integral parts of the area for the purpose of overall planning and implementation of development projects. This will result in potential and emotional integration and remove the extent between the rural and urban dwellers and pave the way for the evaluation of

an organised community. Despite serious difficulties in this regard the committee rightly recommended that the districts which are the units of administration should also be the units for overall planning covering the entire rural and urban areas. The introduction of a system of a planning for the whole district, leaving details to be filled up by local areas, will be the first step in the process of building up a new system of development administration, abolishing dichotomy between rural and urban areas in regard to quality and treatment.

Ashok Mehta Report had pointed out that the " evolution from rural to urban way of life is a continuous process with sequences from a tiny hamlet to a sizeable city". Instead of an urban rural dichotomy it saw a rural-urban continuum, which called for linking up the rural areas with urban focal points. They will need to be amalgamated to provide for integrated self government for the continuum. Until then, each state must seriously think of integrative legislation to merge existing panchayat and municipal laws in order to build a coherent third stratum<sup>9</sup>. An experiment in West Bengal in this regard is worth mentioning.

In West Bengal, there are two arms of District Planning and Coordination Committee (DPCC) - constituted for district plan namely, District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and the District Urban Development Agency (DUDA). The DPCC is provided with necessary capabilities to arrange for effective planning and coordination at the district level among various line departments within and outside of the PRIs as well as those under the Municipalities. It is the character of a district which will decide whether DRDA and DUDA will be the dominant role in a district. Dakshin Dinajpur district being agriculture dominated is mainly rural. Yet there are some common interest between the panchayats and the Municipalities including spatial planning, sharing of water and other physical and natural resources.

Concept of Optimum District - The concept of 'optimum district' came up consideration in the 19th century-centering around the relationship between population and territory. This was left more to a matter of judgement than as an attainable reality. It is not feasible to find criteria for the creation of an optimum district in a vast country like India. As yet it has remained as an elusive concept. Creation of manageable district by way of developmental paradigms and for the purpose of public tranquillity workable formulae may have to be involved. It is equally vital here to the systemic cohesiveness and organic growth of the district set up.

The district is an area defined by the natural preferences of neighbouring social groups to make their collective life meaningful to one another, and brought under a common administration. Its boundaries are settled by the extent of their effective intercourse and by practical considerations to enhance administrative convenience. The dissimilarities in the size of districts both in area and population are largely attributable to the natural preferences and to the extent of the effort obtaining local finality.

Sometimes the size of a district is sought to be curved out by establishing an ideal correlation between population and territory. But such an effort has not been crowned with success. As yet, in West Bengal for example, there is small districts like Malda, and big districts like Burdwan and Jalpaiguri with varying population size. This makes a big difference in respect of District Magistrate's contour of functions. Again, socio-economic and climatic conditions differ between districts. Some of them are primarily agriculture based while others represent a mixture of agriculture and industry. In fact, lack of identifying representative district among 450 districts in India impedes the growth of theory of territorial administration.

Theory of local finality - A district can be created by the arbitrary exercise of political will as has been done in almost every state in India but its administration can hardly overlook the role of the theory of local finality in the life of its people.

The British in the early part of their rule considered that large districts were not only economic from the administrative point of view but also conducive to the consolidation of power. However, towards the end of their regime as communication and other facilities improved, they opted for compact size of district. Unless the concept of optimum as applied to the district is given an unequivocal definition and its implications are made specific, it will remain more or less interchangeable for the idea of compactness.

There has been hardly an effort even in advanced democracies to structure a model that may be used to resolve the optimum size of a country or a region, and in India a land of glaring diversities and social heterogeneity and vast contradictions, the attempt at involving an optimum district is bound to fail as it will be different for different states and different regions.

A theory of rationalisation of districts besides area and population, should objectively embrace productivity of the land and the people; land management, communication, accessibility, criteria for carving out a new district, leadership, 'time-distance' between the district headquarters and the peripheral village, socio-cultural homogeneity, geographical and topographical factors, historic traditions, the pattern revenue administration, resources for development, volume of work in the district office and principles of reorganisation.

The aim of the theory, apart from satiating the search for finality of the inhabitants in matters important to their day to day life, should be to create manageable district instead of the impossible and obviously elusive optimum<sup>10</sup>.

In India, after independence, with the adoption of the ideals of a welfare state, democratic decentralisation, and the need for development at the grass root level changed the entire nature of district administration (see chapter - II) with the implementation of these programmes the functions of collector has also been changed. His functions can broadly be divided into two heads : regulatory and developmental. Regulatory functions include : maintenance of law and order, collection of revenue, magisterial responsibilities etc. The Balwantrai Mehta Committee had recommended : "At the district level, the collector or the Deputy Commissioner should be the captain of the team of officers of all Development Departments and should be made fully responsible for the necessary coordination and cooperation in the preparation and execution of district plans for community development<sup>11</sup>. The maintenance of the public distribution system and the supply of essential commodities, welfare programmes specially for the scheduled castes and tribes also demand close attention. Then there are occasional events like elections, natural calamities and communal violences which keep a collector tied down for weeks together, creating huge back log of work.

The District collector has to coordinate the activities of different departments like P.W.D., irrigation, power, forest, agriculture, health and family welfare. The role of the collector as a co-ordinator is becoming increasingly important as well as difficult. The co-ordinating mechanism is weak with the result that the different links of district administration do not pull together and indeed often work at cross purposes<sup>12</sup>. For purpose of coordination the pattern is that the collector should hold meetings of the officers posted in the various agencies at the district level at periodic-intervals.

The collector can be effective through a reduction in his burden. This was endorsed by the Administrative Reforms Commission who observed in their report in 1969 : "No single individual can be expected to take the full load of the regulatory functions as well as of the new functions connected with development. It is therefore necessary to bifurcate existing responsibilities of the collector into regulatory and developmental. The collector will be in charge of the former and the panchayati Raj institutions of the latter."

The states like Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat have made sincere attempts to implement this idea (see chapter - V). They have district level development officers who function almost independently of their respective District collectors. However, through experience, the states have realised that it is not possible to run two parallel systems of administration in a district and that the developmental programmes of a district could not really take off without the active participation of the local collector. Today, the collectors of Maharashtra and Gujarat are again playing a major role in the formulation and implementation of development programmes<sup>13</sup>.

Thus, the artificial dichotomy envisaged between a collector's developmental activities and his regulatory functions has proved to be an undesirable myth. A collector can not be expected to maintain law and order effectively unless he understands the needs and aspirations of the people and can ensure timely formulation and implementation of development programmes meant for them<sup>14</sup>.

A brief discussion on the states of development administration is not out of order here. The distinction between 'development' and 'regulatory' should not be carried too far for reasons stated : conceptually, it is likely to disrupt Public Administration as a homogenous discipline; practically, the differentiation between development and regulatory administration is highly artificial. In the practical world of administration there is a lot of overlap and inter dependence between the cognate aims of administration. The routine land revenue or law and order administration creates conditions propitious for development. If the state fails to maintain law and order no development effort will succeed. Similarly, failure of developmental effort may breed shouldering discontent that might conflagrate into a serious law and order problem. Another significant fact of development is the creation of capital assets that must be maintained properly. All these highlight the fact that there is a high degree of interdependence between

development administration and regulatory administration. Some critics, however, felt in late 1970s that development administration has become a “fence around an empty lot”<sup>15</sup>.

Despite such criticisms against development administration “the proponents of social engineering may still stick on to development administration hoping faintly that between a district “revolution” and can immediate development enterprises the third world governments have got to choose the latter”<sup>16</sup>.

### **Need for a theory for reorganising the district administration**

The Western Societies like U.K., district level administration has been a local democracy. In France, the office of the prefect is abolished. Way back in 1982 his authority transferred to the general council popularly elected and in Ceylon, the government agent has been made subordinate to duality, the district political authority who is a member of Parliament and the chairman of D.D.C. who is elected by the elected representatives of the D.D.C. Even in Thailand, land of military dictatorship, the district (Amphoe) is a local democracy. As yet in India, there has not been any theory or model for reorganising the district administration with democratic foundations that may give viability and vitality to the Super-Structure of the representative system of government at the central and state levels. The present trend of decentralised system woven around zilla parishad may give direction towards reforming district administration.

A thorough and progressive reorganisation of the district administration on representative principles is a condition precedent to be fulfilled for eliminating political backwardness of the people, training them in the art of self-government and the adoption of democracy by them as a way of life. It calls for a formulation of a new theory envisaging the changes to be brought about by the reorganisation and drawing its defence and justification from republican philosophy. The theory should be capable of generating political conviction in the changes and of forging the political will to carry them out with courage and determination.

Apart from providing for local finality according to the changing times, it must redesign the pattern of district administration conducive to the emergence of a fullfledged local self-government replacing the bureaucratic hegemony with democratic leadership.

Design of District Government - Decentralisation below the state level can not be viewed in isolation from the larger issue of reordering relations between the centre and the States. Democratic decentralisation as an idea has gained wide acceptance. What has been adequately recognised, however, is that the effective implementation of the idea requires major changes in the system of governance.

A brief discussion on the proposal of Nirmal Mukherjee and the response given by Abhijit Dutta would not be out of place here. In a thought - provoking paper, Nirmal Mukherjee has pleaded for devolution of political powers to directly elected district governments in the country.<sup>17</sup>

The Mukherjee proposal on district government may be in terms of the following attributes :

- (i) District government should form a third tier of India's federal polity, with proper constitutional backing.
- (ii) Its powers should be constitutionally specified and the domain so marked out, it should have functional autonomy.
- (iii) Its representative character should be ensured by a system of direct elections, to be held at regular intervals, under the overall supervision of the Election Commission.
- (iv) Suppression should be constitutionally barred.
- (v) Finances to match functions should be assured, through State Finance Commission or other means.
- (vi) District government should replace the collector pattern, the district bureaucracy coming squarely under its control.

Abhijit Dutta wants to show that an 'independent' system of local government could also substantially meet the requirement of the Mukherjee proposal.

Among the three alternative models of district government, only the independent district government is originally linked with a systems of sub-district local government. While there may not be a need for additional units of local government along with the autonomous district, creation of local government in a system of coordinate district would presumably be the responsibility of the state government and these two sub-state government, district and local-would operate in parallel to each other<sup>18</sup>.

Both the coordinate and the autonomous district governments would be directly elected, while the independent district government would be a federation of unitary local governments and concerned only with trans-local functions-mandal panchayats in the large rural districts, and the mandals, towns and cities in the metropolitan districts. Smaller independent rural district would have a unitary structure. The independent district government, is, therefore, more flexible in terms of local and area wide functional responsibilities with variations in terms of methods of electoral representation<sup>19</sup>. Unlike Mukherjee proposal, Abhijit Dutta would like to enable the Comptroller and Auditor general to oversee the functioning of the co-ordinate districts as well as independent districts.

Mukherjee's plan for financing coordinate district government hinges on a "new financial regime" where all the public revenues are pooled together for subsequent distribution among the various levels of government in accordance with constitutionally fixed percentages.<sup>20</sup>.

"An alternative and less drastic method would be to use the existing union and state powers through the use of the concurrent list of the 7th schedule in the constitution,, as has been proposed for the independent district government. The autonomous district governments are limited to the ambit of the state list of the 7th schedule."

He also states "It is possible to devise methods of central and state revenue sharing plans through statutory means and their allocation to the district government through a constitutional machinery, like the central and state Finance Commissioners, even where specified taxes and functions are assigned to the district governments."

However, Mr. Dutta admits that any future discussions on the reform of rural local government cannot ignore the Mukherjee Proposal. For the first time, in free India, such a bold proposal of democratic decentralisation has been made which

promises to completely break away from the inherited colonial tradition of governance and administration in India.

In a vast and populous country, like India with its diversity in socio-economic scene, uneven resource endowments and characterised by wide spread poverty and unemployment, the task of planning to bring about significant improvement in levels of living of the masses is undoubtedly difficult but not insurmountable. India has chose the path of planned development under the federal set up. The structure of government undergoes changes in response to emerging situation through reforms and re-organisation. The 73rd and 74th amendment of the constitution lead us towards decentralisation. Again, a series of follow-up action needed to be taken by the central and state governments. Function sharing and power sharing are essential features of decentralisation. The review of experiences of decentralisation in developing countries could provide us useful lessons. The unwinding process must begin at New Delhi. The states should prepare themselves to shed some powers in favour of the local self government Institutions.

## EPILOGUE - II

Administration has ever been the main instrument for regulating the ways of society. In democracy, although politics, administration and social structure are apparently divisible, often tend to interact so intensely as to make the distinction theoretical. The grassroot politics of democracy takes definite form to be an integral part of the national politics at the district level. Therefore, in constitutional countries district or similar territorial unit is an important region both from political and administrative angles.

It has been pointed out previously that Dakshin Dinajpur District has been carved out of West Dinajpur, having its boundary with Bangladesh. Being geographically closer to a foreign country a good number of problems ensue, specially from the administrative point of view. It has been mainly an agriculture based district and one of the most backward districts in West Bengal. Backwardness brings forth a plethora of problems. Attempt is made here to explore to what extent such problems are solved through decentralised, participatory planning process as being experimented in West Bengal.

In Dakshin Dinajpur district as in rest of the country, rural poverty is a deep and all pervasive. In order to grapple with poverty a good number of centre and state-sponsored poverty alleviation programmes have been launched. These programmes are classified under : area and target group. Tasks of implementing them had been developed upon the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Before the advent of 73rd constitutional amendment the state of West Bengal since 1979 invested the Panchayats with the authority of implementing rural development programmes. This new emphasis on Panchayat system, institutional form rural self government helped in mass mobilisation particularly rural poor. As an effective instrument of rural development programmes too these rural institutions were cast into significant role. While performing the task the panchyati Raj institutions had organised the rural poor and assisted them in assertion of their right for holistic development in rural areas.

To study rural development in Dakshin Dinajpur, a brief note on district plan is not out of place. Dakshin Dinajpur is agriculture based. While preparing district plan agriculture should receive primacy. Attempt has been made to make a brief review of

financial resources and performance appraisal of schemes relating to agriculture, animal husbandry, social forestry, public works Department, land reforms and social welfare (see chapter VI)

Relating to collection of materials a lot of difficulties had been experienced. At the outset it is relevant to note that constitution of panchayat institutions hinges largely on political considerations. In other words, instead of selecting right kind of people as candidates there has been predominance of political selection in panchayats. It is not however suggested here to revert to 'partyless' democracy at local level. In most cases, selection is guided by 'Iron law of oligarchy' which is now very much at work in politics in India today. Therefore, not unoften greater emphasis is placed in panchayat on political activities rather than development and change. That explains why Sathadhipati/Sabhapati/Pradhan willingly or unwillingly at terms attended political meetings living aside an important meeting on development.

Evidently, some development programmes have overtone with political considerations. Besides to undertake as many works as possible to demonstrate panchayats' effectiveness to the people and to secure political support has been the perceptible trend. An official directly concerned with development agency rightly felt that "the elected members have to satisfy the people who have supported them in the election and made them successful". Not unexpectedly, therefore, pressure is brought to bear upon the officials to give priority to works belonging to areas from where the 'important members' of the zilla parishad are elected. In reality,, political hegemony on the one hand and state government's bossism on the other loom large on district planning. Following the Blueprint approach, the zilla parishad departments dealing with a specific sector prepare programmes according to the guidelines provided by the state level departments. This negates to a great the bottom-up approach in district level planning; state secretariat continues to dominate the planning process. There is, however, no denial of the fact that different districts of West Bengal are presently at different stages of decentralized planning.

As 'political will' is necessary to carry forward decentralised planning it is therefore, important to none political configuration in the district.

Dakshin Dinajpur is the bastion of Revolutionary Socialist Party(RSP) Within the district however there are pockets known 'Zone of influence' of different parties.

While Balurghat is dominated by R.S.P, Gangarampur remains under the influence of CPI(M). Both these areas are represented by two ministers\*. Besides these two ministers, MPs and MLAs from the district being the members of zilla parishad provide the foundation of 'Linkage politics' in the sense that state level influence percolate through them inevitably at zilla parishad level. Admittedly, relationship between RSP and CPI(M) is not known to be cordial, though they are coalition partners in Left front. At times, tension and evert opposition between them upset and retard development programmes. These influentials politicians in the panchayati raj can manage to modify and twist the official policies and procedure to suit their requirements. This runs counter to the 'learning process' approach at the local level planning. It blurs the concept of planning with people. Another manifest problem is lack of proper coordination and synchronisation of plans in the district. There should be a logical relations among the activities of different departments and agencies. As for example, agriculture and diary development schemes have to be linked with provision of inputs and credit, communication, roads, markets, rural electrification etc. Livestock development has to be connected with animal health, pasture and fodder development. Irrigation should cover catchment area treatment to command area development. It is well-known that education of girls and women, Nutrition, rural health and sanitation and rural water supply have a very significant role to play in the family welfare programmes and to achieve the small family norm. The complementarity of the activities and the supplemental role of the funds from different sources can be properly realised by way of target group or area wise approach at the district level. Technical expertise required for such an exercise can only be found at the district level. Effective horizontal coordination between different agencies would be possible under a single umbrella body at the District level with a dynamic leadership. A careful examination of the functions of zilla parishad would reveal that it has to perform the role of coordination. But such 'coordination, is largely absent in Dakshin Dinajpur. Officials hardly play effective role for two reasons : First, excessive dependence on state level officials for guidance; they enjoy limited powers; second, most of them, psychologically, are not attuned to development ethos. Gathering experiences from regulatory agencies most of them confine their activity to 'command' not 'cooperation'. Besides, Development agencies, in a bid to competition, jealously maintain their separate identity. In other words, 'rock departmentalism' still persists in the district level planning.

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\* Balurghat is represented by Sri Biswanath Choudhury(RSP) minister in charge of Jail and social welfare and Gangarampur by Shrimati Minati Ghosh (CPI(M)), Minister in charge of family planning.

The district is facing a crucial problem regarding the infiltration from the neighbouring country, Bangladesh and its impact is reflected on the socio-economic condition of the district. Having plenty of money they used to purchase everything with high prices. Again, the unofficial transportation of some essential goods, i.e., smuggling, is occurring frequently nowadays. As a result, there arises an artificial scarcity of essential commodities in the area. Both the infiltrators and the smugglers are taking shelter under the umbrella of the ruling parties of the respective areas. The administrative machinery is partly unsuccessful to prevent such type of practice under such democratic structure. Hence fruits of development can hardly be enjoyed by the local needy people. This phenomenon opens up a new paradigm in so far as development of an area adjacent to the area which is relatively backward.

The district had experienced devastating floods in the years, 1987, '88 and '95. It might be caused due to swelling of rivers, breach of dams or incessant rain etc. In the year 1995, the district headquarters i.e., Balurghat was completely detached from other areas. From the evidences collected it is apparent that there was an absence of crisis management". In the crisis management, the district magistrate remains as the fulcrum around which the entire administrative machinery should resolve. It has also been seen that manual relating to such situation was more often violated than observed. For this much of the blame has to be attributed to interdepartmental funds and lack of understanding between bureaucracy and political elites.

It is true that politicians and bureaucrats can hardly escape working with each other, especially in a democratic setup. It is, therefore, in their own interest to understand each other's problems and limitations, at a very early stage and in a small territory where the problems are comparatively easy and manageable. The attitudinal differences between politicians and the bureaucracy can be brought down to an acceptable level over a period of time, as both the groups gain experience in working together and managing the developmental works at district level.

In those states where elected zilla parishads are in existence at the district level, all rural development programmes including the schemes relating to anti-poverty programmes should be transferred to them. This will ensure participation of the elected representatives of the people in the planning of anti-poverty and other rural development programmes and make available the guidance of the local representatives in the implementation of programmes.

Like in other zilla parishads - Administrators and representatives elected by the people - are linked together in the task of rural development in Dakshin Dinajpur district. In most ways these groups are different : education, urban-rural antecedents, caste membership, occupation and ambition, In addition , there is the traditional gaps between steerer and steered, the social distance with roots embedded in history While serving in new context, administrators are to function as advisers and educators and at the same time retain their integrity and their impartiality as civil servants. Relationship between civil servants and elected representatives has been studied by various scholars since 1964\* onwards and the investigations have brought to surface three fold difficulties thus :

(a) allocation of areas of competence is not clear cut and administrators have to work under a 'double yoke' from their superiors in the administration and from those popularly elected;

(b) the administration is subject to great pressure from political and other interest groups within PR;

(c) The roles and attitudes of administrators and politicians are largely incomparable.

Our investigations too has reinforced these difficulties. The problem of coordination and cooperation has further been accentuated due to the presence of generalist - specialist controversy. Writing at a time when pay packets under the recommendations of 5th Pay Commission are being finalised specialists feel that their services have been denigrated due to lack of parity in pay and status.

**\* Some of the important studies are :**

(i) V.R.Gaikwad's excellent summary in Panchayati Raj & Bureaucracy : A study of Relationship pattern 1969.

(2) A. Bhatt : Tensions in PR - A comment, the Economic Weekly, August 1964.

(3) U.C. Ghidyal : Behind decentralised democracy : Some reflections on Administrative Behaviour, Behavioural Survey and Community department, Sep. 1990.

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12. Hazary Narayan; District Administration in India; Perspectives on change; **Administrative Change**, op.cit.
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