

# **Chapter - I**

## **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION : FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

A district has been defined in the concise Oxford Dictionary as a territory, marked off for special administrative purposes. Administration of public affairs in such a territory, in India, is called district administration. Prof. Potter defines district administration as “the total action of Government in an area specified as a district by the State Government”<sup>1</sup>. According to Khera, “District administration is the total functioning of the government in the district; the total and complex organisation of the management of public affairs, at work, dynamic and not static; in the territory of a geographically demarcated district.”<sup>2</sup>

District Administration is one of the most important characteristics of the Indian administrative system and has been one of its most powerful institutions. During the colonial regime, it had been rigorously built up to bring the totality of the government closer to the people. As a hierarchical sub-system of the state administration, district administration had been designed to perform specific tasks. So long as revenue, law and order were the dominant considerations, the district collector was accepted as the pre-eminent officer in the district administration. He represented the provisional government in its totality. He verily acted as the eyes, ears and arms of the government. As long as the tasks of the district officer remained unchanged and there was little impact on them of the growing total institutions in the country, the administrative system remained free from any competitive political or administrative forces. With Independence and the consequent vast changes in the nature of the duties of a district officer relating to development, planning and national building activities, the system of administration at the district level faced greater challenges. Revenue, law and order were not as important as road building, canal construction, educational expansion, agricultural development etc, while they were seen as a reflection of the wishes of the people themselves, many of these activities required a high degree of technical know-how that was beyond the direct experience and training of the District Collector. According to a group of scholars, the system of administration at the district level passed from an ‘integrated Stage’ into a ‘differentiated stage’.

Even in this new context, the importance of the district administration continues. This derives from the basic fact that district administration is close to the people and it

is through district administration that the policies and programmes for economic development and social change in the rural areas being implemented. When economic and social administration in the district is concerned, the aspects of 'change' in place of 'continuity' become predominant feature in District Administration. These changes in objective and goals and in the methods of administration are in many ways new. The old apparatus of district administration is related to this new structure in rather novel ways, which hold great promise. Basically these involve servicing, the rendering of expert technical, organisational and administrative advice, and a general overseeing. Each of these provides an opportunity and a challenge to all who are concerned with district administration. These changes involve new relationships in the whole of the administrative apparatus in the district, new modes of communication and lines of controlling, guiding and influencing decisions, and also somewhat new concepts and methods of accountability. Our district administration today is different in many ways from what it was in pre-independence days. The introduction of the Community Development Programmes and the creation of the Community Development Blocks in the early fifties heralded the first phase of change. The three-tier Panchayati Raj institutions set up in the early sixties brought the second round. The third spate came about in the early seventies with the separation of judiciary at the district level and the introduction of various district planning co-ordination bodies.

Because of the extent of the modern state in area and population, and because of the wide range of its functions it is impossible for the central Government to perform the multifarious functions from one centre with speed and efficiency. Hence there arises the necessity of decentralisation of administration. Decentralisation of administration is essential for the successful working of democracy. "The process of decentralisation denotes the transference of authority, legislative, judicial or administrative from a higher level of government to lower levels."<sup>3</sup> Louis Allen opines that the transference of power from the central to the lower level of Governmental unit is called decentralisation<sup>4</sup>. According to United Nation's A Handbook of Public Administration, decentralisation is, "A plan of administration which will permit the greatest possible number of actions to be taken in the areas, provinces, districts, towns and villages where the people resides"<sup>5</sup>. The objective of local Government or field administration is to see that the people at all levels of the country get the benefit of good governance. By this way the whole state is divided into several hierarchical administrative units and the governing power is delegated upon the local authorities

for administrative convenience. These administrative units are called local government. For the proper administration of the state functions, decentralisation of administration is essential and the local government is the creation of the process of decentralisation of administration<sup>6</sup>.

To give shape to the concept of decentralised planning, district administration is expected to formulate district development plans, linked up with state and national plans. The head of the district administration, viz., Collector, Deputy Commissioner or District Magistrate as he is variously known, has to elicit the cooperation of all departments and institutions as well as public participation in formulating and implementing district plans. A whole lot of development Programmes were thrust upon the district administration. This together with a rapidly growing population and their rising expectations changed the entire pattern of district administration. Apart from direct responsibilities, a collector frequently gets involved with the programmes of other departments, like the P.W.D., irrigation, power, forest, agriculture, health and family welfare. He has to co-ordinate their activities and also help them in sorting out problems, interdepartmental or local. Such role of the collector as a co-ordinator has been becoming increasingly important but difficult.

As district officer he is required in fact to remain concerned with the general circumstances of his district, touching not only on the problems of place and fiscal administration, but also on other related matters affecting its economy and general well-being. There are, of course, variation in the pattern of district administration, nonetheless the district officer remains its central pillar.

The range and complexity of activities which have to be undertaken by district administration have increased enormously not only as a result of the introduction of development programmes but also measures like land reforms, assumption of responsibilities for dealing with natural calamities, the public distribution system and various welfare programmes specially for the scheduled castes and tribes.

It has been observed that with the shift of emphasis towards development administration, routine work has been suffered. The collection of government dues and maintenance of land records has fallen into arrears. Owing to diminishing importance of regulatory functions and consequently the separation of powers at the field level, the District Officer gradually began to lose his earlier grip on law and order. T.K.Das

asserts, "Eventually, the collector could neither attain developmental targets nor maintain his past standards in routine and regulatory functions"<sup>7</sup>.

The process of change and the complexity if endangered ought to have attracted serious research on the organisational design of the administration at the district level. According to the Report of the Administrative Reform Commission," 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 Panchyati Raj Institutions of the latter". But the artificial dichotomy envisaged between a collector's developmental and his regulatory functions has proved to be a desirable myth. A collector cannot 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.

Before discussing the concept "Rural Development", it would perhaps be useful to define the term "Development" in general. Development can be seen as an aspect of human will and activity and a particular kind of planning aimed at transforming an under developed country into a developed one. It is a process of social change whereby less developed countries acquire the characteristics common to more developed ones<sup>8</sup>. Scholars have defined it in various ways because it is a dynamic and changing concept<sup>9</sup>. The economists identify it with growth of national economy, the sociologists view it as social change and the political scientists identify it with wider participation of the people in the political process and administration. The development is defined as a way of growth into a better, higher and a maturer form of existence. It is a process through which individuals or institutions move from being to becoming. In the word of Ferrel Heady, development tends to be discussed in total social terms as distinct from modernisation<sup>10</sup>. Development means the transformation of a society or a state from underdevelopment to a developed one in all respects of human life. Though economic development is the main criteria to measure development of a society or of a state as a whole, but it is not all. It encompasses all aspects of human existence in a society. Without the betterment of human life there is no better thing to justify development. Any development work should give more importance to man than to things, machine, technology etc. Man has to be at the centre of development, not only because he must

be its chief beneficiary, but also because development essentially means man's development. Human development takes place when there is a personal growth. Actually development and personal growth are synonymous<sup>11</sup>.

The term 'rural development' is of local interest and is widely acclaimed in both the developed and the developing countries of the world. There is, however, no universally acceptable definition of rural development, and the term is used in different ways and in vastly divergent contexts. As a concept, it connotes overall development of rural areas with a view to improving the quality of life of rural people. In this sense, it is a comprehensive and multidimensional concept and encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities- village and cottage industries and crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community service and facilities, and above all, the human resources in rural areas. As a phenomenon, it is the result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural, and institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and social well being of a specific group of people - the rural poor<sup>12</sup>. In the words of Robert Chambers, "Rural Development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants, and the landless"<sup>13</sup>.

The concept of Rural Development has emerged with a new force and new light and constitute a priority agenda in national policies of the developing countries, particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The common man in India, as also in other developing countries, expects a higher standard of living for himself, his family, his community and his nation. In the context of rural development, policy and planning, 'change' may be considered to be an instrument which can be used to promote development. In India, the introduction of technological changes in the mid sixties (new high yielding varieties of crops, fertilisers, improved farm machinery and pesticides) led to the so called Green Revolution in agriculture. Technological innovations (modern milk processing, feed processing plants, artificial insemination etc) and organisational innovations (Amul Pattern diary cooperatives) introduced in the early seventies contributed significantly to the modernisation and development of dairying. A change may occur naturally or autonomously, or may be induced. A

development manager may accelerate the pace of development by both inducing a desirable change in a given system and by properly directing the autonomous change.

The Department of Rural Development was in fact to concentrate on special programmes for the weaker sections of society as well as credit and marketing facilities, which made it far more comprehensive than the erstwhile Department of Community Development and Panchyati Raj. The Programmes so selected for the purpose on an area basis was to be integrated to produce the desired results, with the highest priority being accorded to agriculture and allied sectors. This new structural pattern for integrated rural development was adopted by the state Government also<sup>14</sup>.

The administrative and organisational issues involved in the execution of policy objectives, however, proceeded in the districts along two parallel hierarchies, democratic and bureaucratic. The former attempted to set up representative institutions at the district and block level in addition to village panchayats established under various state legislations, while the latter proceeded to be reorganised horizontally to facilitate co-ordination at both the district and block level under a generalist administrator co-ordinating the activities of technical departments. Administration of district in modern times has thus become a function of interaction among these main constituents, including the Panchyati Raj. Institutions which is regarded agency for development and decentralisation.

The present work seeks to explore district administration in the above aspects. Has it been able to play the role expected of it in the formulation and implementation of developmental plans and programmes? How should we remodel our district administration? Attempts would also be made to suggest some ideas that would be better able to cope with the demands on administration at the district level.

## **Dimensions and Significance of the Study**

District administration today has to face new challenges and perform new tasks. The social, economic and political context in which it has to function, has also undergone considerable change during last 50 years. The phenomenon of “the revolution of rising expectations” has emerged as a result of greater awareness among

the masses, who want more and more facilities to be provided in rural areas. The under-privileged are no longer willing to accept their position of inferiority in relation to the elite. This manifests itself in periodic unrest in the countryside.

Related to this is the increasing politicization in the wake of successive elections and also the introduction of Panchyati Raj and cooperative institutions. In fact, pressures on district administration have increased on all sides and the district officers have started feeling that to survive they need not only traditional administrative skills but also semi political manipulative skills.

In the nineteenth century it was realised to have an 'optimum district'. The relationship between population and territory was sought to be attained. This was left more to a matter of judgement than as a attainable reality. It is not feasible to find criteria for the creation of an optimum district in a vast country like India. It is an elusive concept. For the creation of manageable district is required by developmental objective and for the purpose of public tranquility workable formulae may be evolved. It is equally vital to the systematic cohesiveness and organic growth of the district set up.

Sometimes the size of a district is sought to be carved 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 district 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.

The present study would identify the district as a planning unit. In future new district pattern may emerge in the light of the extent of planning process. It is said in order to bring to limelight the fact that as viable theory of territorial administration is lacking, a scientifically structured theory having practical orientation between the district and its people is of utmost importance in the territorial administration in India.

In the light of the democratic planning unit, it is intended to discuss Dakshin Dinajpur district which is one of the underdeveloped districts in West Bengal. Its rural



economy is primarily agricultural, and with 70% of its arable land under cultivation of paddy. It is a major and surplus rice-producing district in West Bengal.

The District Magistrate, who was the only representative of the Government during the British period has now become the principal coordinator of various agencies operating in a district. The principal role of District Magistrate as coordinator would be highlighted in the context of his developmental functions. The role of coordination in the sphere of development is really crucial in all the states including West Bengal. The District collector's leadership in the area of development has two aspects: bureaucratic and democratic. The bureaucratic leadership emanates from his pre-eminent position in the district administration based on statues, manuals and instructions. It is incumbent on the part of district level offices to render assistance and advice to him in his capacity as the part of district administration. The democratic leadership stems out of the powers and responsibilities assigned to the District Collector under the provisions of Panchayat legislations. Thus the collector has a significant function with regard to the programme budget and operation of the PRI. By assisting him the role as the principal coordinator in the district set-up, it has been intended to iron out disagreement through him in regard to allocation of resources and setting of priorities in development programmes.

## **Objectives of the Study**

This study has the following objectives: Firstly, to analyses the functional change and the behavioural needs of district administration especially in the crucial context of the democratic polity and the development proclivity of the nation;

Secondly, to survey the study of district administration as it is available today and its concerns and directions;

Thirdly, to find out the impact of development on District Administration;

Fourthly, to focus attention on some of the problems of district administration and the challenges faced by the district officer today;

Fifthly, to examine decentralized planning at the district level;

Sixthly, to study the politics of development in Dakshin Dinajpur District, the administrative and political dimensions of the role and performance of a district officer, interaction between politics and administration;

Finally, to suggest framework for future district administrative set up in the light of democracy, decentralization and development.

## **Overview of Literature**

There have been significant attempt in the post independence period, specially in the sixties, by academic and professional experts, to explore through systematic study and research, the changing patterns and dimensions of this interesting phenomenon, the books which would be consulted are follows:

**Khera, S.S., District Administration in India**, (New Delhi, National Publishing House), 1992 : It is an attempt to describe the administrative complex that goes to make up the district administration, both as to the component parts and to the administration as an organic, integral and dynamic whole.

**Dayal, Mathur and Bhattachartjee, District Administration : A Survey for Reorganisation**, (Delhi, the Macmillan Company of India Ltd.), 1976 : The major purposes of this study is to examine and understand the organisational design for the kinds of activities performed at the district level and also to identify the problems that ensue from the structure and to speculate on some alternative organisational design for district administration.

**Misra, B.B., District Administration and Rural Development**, policy objective and Administrative change in Historical perspective (New Delhi, Oxford University Press)1983 : This book deals with district administration in a historical perspective beginning with the British. The growing demand for decentralization came from elite class, the induction of non-official elements in the district administration, the issue of the generalist-specialised have also been discussed in the light of district administration and rural development.

**Sadasivan, S.N. (ed) : District Administration: A National Perspective** (New Delhi, IJPA), 1988 : The volume consists of selected papers of varying length, and topicwise summary of proceedings of the National Seminar on District Administration organised by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi in cooperation with the Deptt of Personnel, Govt of India.

In the first two articles, “District level coordination in India” and “Political pressures on District Administration” Sadasivan at length traces the evolution of the district as a principal unit of administration and the role of district collector in the district level coordination. He accepts that the problem of coordination is too complex but believes it could be resolved if necessary changes are effected in the organisational set up.

**Imander’s** paper “**District Administration: Alternative Patterns**” briefly examines three alternative patterns, and rightly suggests that the size of the district could be reduced and selection of the officers broad based. In “**District Administration: Design for a New System**”, Das explains the working of a scheme in a village in orissa, and suggests it for its adoption at national level.

**Quraishi** has stressed that the collector can still play a major role in improving the lot of the people in the district. Mahajan in his paper, “**District Administration and democratic Decentralization**” rightly holds the bureaucratic complacency as well as misdemeanour of the rural elite responsible for the failure of the Community Development Programme.

**Verma. S.P., and Sharma, S.K. Development Administration**, (New Delhi, Indian Institute of Public Administration), 1984 : This book discusses the various shades of meaning or approaches to development administration, importance of speed, efficiency, capacity to respond to the emerging challenges and the need for administrative reforms for development.

**Maheshwari, S.R. Rural Development in India** (New Delhi, Sage), 1985 : It is the objective of rural development in India is ultimately to create a self-helping rural community, it has to rely on peoples’ participation and that also under the auspices of people’s representative rural local government institutions, properly known as Panchyati Raj. This seems to be the overall position that the author takes in the book.

**Mutalib, M.A., and Khan, M. Akbar Ali, Theory of local Government,** (New Delhi, Sterling), 1982 : The authors discuss local government keeping in view the broad socio-politico economic canvas within which it operates. They also present a theory of what they term decentralized development. Two key concepts, popular participation and partnership, are emphasised to provide the basis of a theory of decentralized development.

**Chaturbedi. Anil; District Administration, the dynamics of discord,** (New Delhi, Sage Publications), 1988 : The author examines the extent to which government departments and agencies at the district level accept the need for cooperative endeavour, the patterns of the interaction between them and the extent to which external pressures lead to improved interaction. The interaction discussed include those between Police and Administration, Irrigation and Administration, PWD and Administration. These section records views of officials of these agencies on causes of conflict that arise and what can be done to resolve them.

Issues of interdependence, conflict and powerlessness form a separate chapter. This is full of data presented in a tabular form, the concluding part discusses the problems of conflict management.

An important point highlighted in the study is that many problems in co-ordination arise from structural and systematic deficiencies and that the personality factor can often make a great deal of difference. A collector and District Magistrate with the right mix of leadership qualities is better able to take his term along than the one who lacks these qualities.

**S.S. Meenakshisundaram; Decentralisation in Developing Countries,** (New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company), 1994 : This book is most timely and has made an important contribution to the conceptual analysis of on-going process of peoples' participation in public Governanace through democratically decentralised local bodies. The first hand accounts of the author's experience in handling the process of decentralized local bodies in India and experience gained in course of field visits abroad for this study has made it a fascinating reading of this volume as well as providing a comparative framework of systems of local Governments in three countries - Nigeria, China and India.

The volume under review discusses very crucial issues of 'decentralization'; that is, 'structure and relationship' and 'powers and functions' to be entrusted to the local government. The debate surrounding the decentralization experiments in India is central to the challenges of restructuring and devolution of powers and functions faced by panchayats. The author has also touched upon the economic justification for local government apart from political and administrative justification.

The author also has made some important suggestions for strengthening of these bodies which are pragmatic and reasonable. Overall, this book is informative reading for scholars, practitioners and academics interested in the field of local government and decentralization.

**Shah, B.C. and J.N. Pandya (Eds), Revival of Panchayati Raj : trends and Problems;** (Vallab Vidyanagar, Sardar Patel University), 1989 : There are three sections in the book. The first section contains inaugural address by Prof. Iqbal Narain and five other papers dealing with the problems of Panchayati Raj. Iqbal Narain believes that there is no substitute for democratic decentralization and if this has to succeed the handicaps from which it has suffered should be identified and remedied. Section II consists of papers on models of Panchayati Raj in Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh. The last section is devoted entirely to Panchayati Raj experience in Gujarat.

The main drawback of this study was that the trends and problems of a few other states such as Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, which were in the fore front of revitalising the institutions at the Grass roots level have been either partially covered or totally neglected.

**Singh, S.S. and Suresh Misra, Legislative Framework of Panchayati Raj in India,** (New Delhi, Intellectual publishing House), 1993 : Singh and Misra have been more legal formal in their approach, starting with Lord Rippon's two resolutions of 1881 and 1882, the Royal Commission on Decentralization 1909, and the Montague Chelmsford Report and Government of India Resolution of 1908. The main reports on Panchayati Raj Since 1947 have also been briefly mentioned before the three constitutional Amendment Bills of 1989, 1990 and 1991 have been compared in detail. A major part of the book are devoted to extracts from the legislative enactments relating to Panchayati Raj which existed in the 25 states of the country at the time of the passing of the seventy second Constitution Amendment.

**Misra Sweta, Democratic Decentralisation in India**, (New Delhi, Mittal Publications), 1994 : She has discussed the concept of decentralisation, the evolution of Panchayati Raj, the Balwant Rai Mehta Report, 1957; panchayats and Five year plan; the Ashok Mehta Committee Report 1978, the comparative of Panchayati Raj in the states of Karnataka, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh in the Post Mehta Report; a critical and detailed comparison of the 64th, 74th and 72nd Amendments Bills etc., before commenting on the possible future of democratic decentralization in India. She recommends setting up of district planning boards and involving Panchayat Samities in decentralized planning, the mobilisation of people's participation, and the establishment of linkages between various agencies of rural delivery system.

However, neither Legislative Framework of panchayati Raj in India, nor Democratic Decentralization in India leave the reader with a comprehensive idea of how Panchayati Raj has actually been operating in India recently.

**Khanna, B.S., Panchayati Raj in India** (Rural Local self government: National Perspective and state studies, (New Delhi, Deep and Deep Publications), 1994 : In the wake of the 73rd contitution Amendment, Panchayati Raj has become a central theme for scholars working in the field of development Adm. and decentralization. Prof Khanna's book has come at an opportune moment when cutting edge administration is undergoing drastic changes and the role of local government Institution in likely to enhance so as to make them a viable unit of self - government. A good attempt has been made to throw light on the achievements and deficiencies or weakness of PRIs in selected states like Andhra pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala in South, Maharastra and Gujrat in the West, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the North and West Bengal in the east.

Part II of the Book presents a vivid portrait of erstwhile panchayats in ten states with historical perspective and experience of functioning of these bodies.

Part III of this book discusses conclusion and suggestion.

**Hooja, Rakesh and P.C. Mathur (Eds), District and Decentralized Planning**, (Jaipur, Rawat Publications), 1991 : The papers included in the book deal with subjects ranging from evolution of district planning to role of Panchayati Raj institutions in decentralized planning.

**Bhattacharya, Mohit; Development Administration** : Search for Alternative, (New Delhi, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors)1997 : Bhattacharya laments the failure of five decades of 'developments' to bridge the gulf between the rich and the poor in the post colonial Third World Countries. From 'under development' to 'sustainable development' has been a long and arduous journey for the Third World Countries and it is only by putting to people first and relying on people's knowledge of 'how to do people's development' that the present distortion in development could be removed and development made both people friendly and eco-friendly.

**Sapru, R.K.; Development Administration**, (New Delhi, Sterling), 1994 : Sapru examines themes like organisation, development and even regulatory administration for development. His main emphasis is on developing a congenial environment for development, goal clarity, purposeful change, integration among the socio-economic and politico - administrative components of development, enhancing capabilities of bureaucracis, and involving citizens in the implementaion of goal-oriented policies and reforms.

Apart from the above mentioned books many articles from different journals were also studied.

**Singh, U.B.**, "Decentralised planning in India: An Appraisal" in **Indian Journal of Administrative Science**, IIPA, July-Dec. 1990 Vol-1 No-2.

**Datta, P.K.**, "Rural Development through Panchayats :the West Bengal Experience," in **Kurukshetra**, April 1996.

**Arvind Singhal**; 'Evolution of Development and Development Administration Theory, in **Indian Journal of Public Administration** vol. XXXV, Det. Dec. 1989.

**Prasad,C.S.**,"District planning : an Approach to decentralised planning" in **The Administrator**, vol. XXXVI, July-Sep. 1991 : Hanumantha Rao, C.H. Decentralised Planning An overview of Experience and Prospects, Economic and political weekly, 25th Febrary, 1989.

**Datta Abhijit**, " Whither District Government"? **IJPA** oct-Dec, 1989 vol. XXXV No. 4 ,

**Sadasivan, S.N.**, "Towards a Theory of District Administration" **IJPA** July-Sep, 1985. vol XXXi No-3.

**Ramachandran, V.**, "Panchayati Raj in the coming Years;" in **The Administrator**, Vol. XXXVIII, Oct-Dec. 1993.

**Jain, L.C.**, "panchayats: Re-orientation and Restructuring of the Planning Process and state Level Department and Agencies consequent on Establishment of panchayats in Accordance with the 73rd constitutions Amendment," in **The Administrator**, Vol XXXVIII, Oct-Dec. 1993.

**John Oommeu and V. Annamalai**, "Emerging Structure of Panchayati Raj in India : A comparative Analysis of new acts of states," **Indian Journal of Public Administration**, Vol. XI Oct-Dec. 1994.

**Singh Surat and C.A. Rahim**, "Evolving Panchayati Raj Leadership," in **Journal of Rural Development**, vol.8(4) 1989.

**Benninger, Christopher, C.**, "Institutional strategies for Decentralisation in **The Administrator**, vol. XXXVI, July-Sep, 1991.

**Narain Iqbal**, "The idea of democratic decentralisation" in **Indian Journal Of Political Science**, vol. XXI, no.2.

**Mukherjee, Nirmal**;"Decentralisation below the state level" in **Economic and Political Weekly**, March 4, 1989.

**Dasgupta Biplab**, "Panchayati Raj in West Bengal," in **Kurukshetra**, Feb, 1989.

**Datta, Pravat**, "Political Environment of Rural women in India," in **Administrative Change**; vol. XXiV, No.2 Jan-June, 1997.

These are some important works on district administration . But none of them provides comprehensive idea in regard to the future administrative set up. The present work is intended to fill in the gap by providing suggestion for future administrative set up keeping in view democracy and development.

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## Methodology

In the present study Primary and Secondary sources of data were explored. Documents, reports and other official papers relevant for the purpose were studied. Secondary sources like Newspaper, Magazine, Journals, research projects, etc. were also followed.

In order to study indepth development, decentralisation and future administrative set up at the district level, it was intended to undertake an empirical study primarily based on questionnaire followed up by interviews. Officials at different levels were interviewed to elicit information about organisation and actual operations. Official documents, such as minutes of meeting, reports and returns, have also been useful sources of structural data.

The following categories of officials and elected representatives were interviewed:

- i) District Officials.
- ii) Elected officials of Panchayati Raj Institutions,
- iii) Decision-makers of the state level,
- iv) Members of Zilla Parishad,
- v) Political leaders at the state to district level.

## Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions -

1. What are the significant activities of district administration?
2. How is district administration related to the state administration?
3. After independence it was expected that the district machinery would come closer to the people and act as an agent of change. How far it has been possible to implement this? Has there been any change in the context and character of district administration?
4. The functions of District Magistrate can broadly be organised under two heads.

Regulatory and development. There are many discords and conflicts between these two types of functions. How can there be a compromise between them? Can it be possible to bring them into a same framework of district administration?

5. What are the problems of district administration and difficulties in ensuring the transformation of the authoritarian image of the district officer and fulfilling his crucial role as a development administration?
6. What is the functional relationship between the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police in a district?
7. What should be the ideal set-up of our basic administrative set up? Is it possible to strengthen the administration by restructuring the district! Should we make them smaller and more compact?

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