

Chapter - III

DEVELOPMENT, DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION : SOME OBSERVATIONS

Section - A : The Concept of Development

The word 'development' is at once the most fundamental and most elusive concept. There does not appear to be an all-inclusive definition that meets with general consensus. Some analysts would argue that it is impossible to achieve consensus since purpose and context for use of the term vary greatly.

For many analysts, authentic development is perceived as being broadly concerned with overall improvement of conditions of existence of the majority population. At the micro-level, it is supposed to be a beneficial process resulting not only in economic betterment and improved health and education, but also greater human dignity, security, social and economic justice, political freedom and equity. Development is "a widely participatory process of directed social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment"¹.

Within the UN system alone, the word "development" had gathered new connotations over four decades. With the passage of each succeeding development Decade "development" has expanded to mean not only growth in the GNP, but also growth in a society's ability to meet basic needs (ILO) essential services (WHO/ UNICEF), quality of life, people's participation, endogenous development, sustainable development, human resource development and cultural development (UNESCO). The shift seems to focus on a more balanced emphasis between having more and being more in the context of each country's history and cultural heritage.

Development is a multi-dimensional process. To palmer it is "an overall process, with significant social, cultural, political and human as well as economic dimension."². Development is a goal-oriented process. Development is equated with economic growth, social transformation and nation building. National development is the major goal of most developing countries. This single goal subsumes myriads of goals, such

as economic and social progress, political administration, nation building, mobilisation of human and natural resources, reducing the levels of unemployment and poverty, etc. The developing societies are goal oriented societies heading towards modernization³. Development policies and programs are designed to intervene in the free play of societal forces, and therefore the consequences are seen as induced or imposed. This is such a major task that only governments are seen as being able to organise it. In order to support their claims to determine and guide the development process, some governments have vigorously promoted an ideology of developmentalism aligned characterised by a strong degree of central planning, even though the gap between rhetoric and results varies greatly. Some societies offer broad support to government development philosophy, but other populations have become more cynical and argue that developmentalism is an elitist ideology.

The theory of development, in the period preceding the Second World War was the product of the ethos in which it grew and developed. The critical eye was turned on social mal functioning; social malaise had to be attended to and social wrongs had to be rectified. The positivist school was conscious of the need for social action and expected the practitioners of sociology to emerge as the precursors of a new order, Durkheim and Weber restricted themselves mostly to provide analytical insights into social transformations. Marx believed both in the inevitability and desirability of change and projected the path that human society was likely to take, not only to bring about progress, but also a just social order⁴.

In reality, consequences of major societal are not always beneficial to all aspects of a society and to all segments of a population. Industrial economic growth results in environmental pollution. Interests of the peasants and workers may be developed at the expense of capitalists or vice versa. Changes can be simultaneously functional in some ways and dysfunctional in some other ways. However, we do not usually use terms to denote the harmful consequences of change terms such as “maldevelopment”, “under development,” or “de-development”. This results in a third usage of “development” which refers to all the consequences of societal change regardless of whether they are desirable or not.

In some “development” can mean : (1) actual or real progress; (2) desirable or preferred progress; and (3) overall societal change, with its full range of consequences. People who use the term “development” do not always make clear which one of these

conceptualisations is in use, further adding to the confusion and complexity in development analysis⁵.

Modern development is characterised by technological innovation which have altered the nature of development and greatly complicated its objectives . The computer, the nuclear technology, the space technology and many other sophisticated precision technologies have greatly influenced all aspects of society and human life. Riggs says that the “Spread of modern technology has created the *ceumene*, i.e., a globally interdependent social system”⁶. Most developing societies are now undergoing a process of technological revolution⁷.

Political stability and maintenance of order and security are other features of modern development. Without these developments as a sustained goal in the direction of nation building and socio-economic progress in the developing countries can not be achieved.

Development in any particular nation consists of a synergy of such development goals as promoting literacy, improving nutrition and health, limiting family size, or increasing productivity. The precise nature of particular development problems vary from one country to another, depending on their unique economic, social, political and cultural characteristics development is a top priority of national government in every Third World Country. The purposes of development are very popular. Who could argue against overcoming the limitations of illiteracy, improving the health and nutrition of a nations’ population, and producing more food so as to decrease hunger . Thus, while the goals of this type of directed social change are widely agreed upon, yet how these goals are to be attained precisely is often contentions⁸.

Approaches to Development or Trends in Development Theories

As we know, the field of development has been dominated by three schools of research over the past four decades: the modernisation school, the dependency school, and the World-system School. These schools emerged from different historical contexts, were influenced by different theoretical if not ideological traditions, and imply different solutions to problems of development. Each school has come under

criticisms and in response modified its basic assumptions as well as developed new research agenda. In this section we shall examine certain approaches and theories of development.

1. Economic Approaches

Soon after World War II, many Third World Countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America gained their independence from Western colonial rule. These newly-independent Third World nations noted the pathways that had been followed by the Western industrialised countries to achieve socio-economic progress. Economists advised the people of third world countries to save more and invest it as capital, a strategy based on the writings of such classical economists as Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx, The key mention, therefore, was where and how to invest.

Rostow⁹ identified five stages in the process of a nations economic development: (1) a traditional society, characterised by low level of technology, a rigid social structure, fatalistic attitudes, and a low per capita income; (2) Preconditions for take off evolve as a traditional society is exposed to modern scientific knowledge and technology, and traditional values begin to break down; (3) take off, wherein sustained economic growth gets underway, and the society discards its traditional values, (4) drive to maturity, in which a society undergoes rapid economic growth and becomes integrated into the larger international economic system; and (5) high mass consumption, final stage of development, characterised by a high standard of living for a majority of the society, Rostow emphasised GNP as a measure of a country's progress in development. While useful in giving an understanding of the stages of development, Rostow's approach does not discuss the specific processes which boost a society from one stage to another¹⁰.

2. Psychological Approaches

The psychological approaches to development is rooted in Max Weber's analysis of emergence of the protestant ethic and the subsequent rise of modern capitalism in the Western World. Weber argued that capitalism flourished in Europe because the

Protestant reformation movement ended the long-established authority of the church, encouraging rational scientific inquiry. Modern European society displayed a spirit of capitalism, where roots originated in ascetic protestantism¹¹.

The psychological approach to development is rooted in the works of David McClelland and Everett Hagen. They explained development in terms of social change. They claim that the level of achievement in a society is expressed in terms of the level of innovation and entrepreneurship. Economic constraints or limitations can be overcome given a sufficiently high motivation to do well by the individual entrepreneur.

McClelland argued that the need for achievement encourages an individual to meet challenges, to take risks and to succeed in the face of difficulties. According to McClelland, Western industrialised countries contained individuals with a degree of achievement motivation which led a high rate of national income growth. Hagen observed that traditional Third World societies produced authoritarian personalities who lacked self-confidence, exhibited a high level of anxiety when faced with new situations, and who were keen to maintain statusquo. Hagen agreed that for development to happen, individual personalities had to change. More innovative personalities could be developed by improving literacy, by expanding the mass media by urbanisation, and by promoting nationalism¹². McClelland's and Hagen's approaches to development are criticised because of their narrow focus on individual personality traits, and because of their seemingly elitist, condescending view of Third World Societies¹³.

Inkeles and Smith also attempted to explain development in terms of the presence of particular personality traits¹⁴. They argued that development was associated with the presence of a particular personality trait in a society, and economic development depended on the emergence of 'modern man'. They argued that modern personality traits were learned through interaction with such modern institutions as the school, the mass media, and the factory. The human personality changed through the process of socialisation, especially through interactions with Social institutions.

These approaches to development assumed that Third World Countries were themselves responsible for their underdevelopment and did not take into account the external factors that happened their development. Dependency Theory attempted to explain the underdevelopment state of the Third World Countries.

3. Diffusion Approach

Diffusion is defined as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system¹⁵.

Diffusion approach has been advocated mainly by Everett M. Rogers¹⁶ and R.S. Edari¹⁷. Edari utilises diffusion theory in a somewhat narrow sense to explain the process of Third world development. He argues that Third World Countries will develop to the extent that : (i) Western industrialised countries provide capital to invest in development programmes, (ii) they adopt modern methods of agricultural and industrial production, and (iii) they adopt those values, attitudes and behaviour patterns that characterise Western industrialised countries. These theorists stressed economic growth through industrialisation¹⁸. The obvious way for Third World countries to develop was to follow the Western model of development.

4. Dependency Theory

Dependency theory gained popularity during the 1960s in the writings of several Latin American scholars, Its chief spokesperson was Andre Gundar Frank, a critic of economic and psychological approaches to development. He explains that there is a 'chain of dependency' running down from the highly advanced centres of the world, a hierarchy of 'metropolises' with their subordinate 'satellites' through which the economic surplus is passed upwards within a nation and then internationally. There is, he says, "a whole chain of metropolises and satellites, which runs from the world metropolis down to the hacienda or rural merchant who are satellites of the local commercial metropolitan centre but who in their turn have peasants as their satellites."¹⁹.

Dependency theorists such as Frank²⁰, and Cardoso and Faletto²¹ argue that the massive and persistent poverty in countries like Argentina, Peru, Chile and Brazil is caused by exposure to the economic and political influences of the industrialised countries. They argue that the Western industrialised countries developed by exploiting human and natural resources of their Asian, African and Latin American colonies, and by making them economically dependent on their colonial powers. Unlike other theoretical approaches, which assume that Third World countries exist in isolation,

dependency theory argues that Third World countries have been in too close contact with the Western industrialised countries²². Neocolonialism continues as western industrialised countries continue their political and economic domination of their former colonies.

The recommendations from Dependency theory are :

- i) The Third world should break its links with capitalist metropolis;
- ii) That it should do this by challenging international capitalism, mainly by the working class removing the domestic comprador elite;
- iii) They should develop a policy of international solidarity between Third World countries in order to help each other to build an effectively independent industrial base in the south.

These policy recommendations are derived from the Marxian structuralists thesis that world capitalism is inherently contrary to people's real needs. A policy of collective self reliance has been recommended to be pursued by all Third World 'Socialist' governments, though many in reality find it exceptionally difficult to extract themselves from the capitalist world economy.

Modernisation theorists criticised the dependency perspective as mere propaganda for Marxist revolutionary ideology. Moreover, the dependency perspective was accused of being highly abstract. Aiming to outline the general pattern of dependency in Third World Countries, the theorists are said to have committed the major error of treating all peripheral areas as if they were the same. Critics charged that dependency studies seldom made a serious attempt to bring out the historically specific development of each particular Third World country, therefore leaving little room for analysis of national variations.

The marxist critics charged that the dependency school had grossly overemphasised external conditions and, correspondingly, neglected the primacy of internal dynamics. The critics argued that to conceptualise underdevelopment in terms of dependency is to lose sight of the most decisive process of class formation and social relations that begets change.

In the 1970s and 1980s the development problem has been reconceptualised in various ways - Rather, than looking at GNP as a measure of development or growth, meeting basic human needs, equitable distribution of socio-economic benefits, and people empowerment are being increasingly looked upon as development goals. Development scholars no longer treat the Third World as a homogeneous group of countries, but increasingly recognise the importance of cultural, context- based approaches to development²³.

A single comprehensive theory of development does not exist. The contemporary theoretical approaches to development are : (1) Pluralistic, recognising many pathways to development, and (2) less western in their cultural assumptions. Instead of stressing per capita GNP as a measure of development, present-day development approaches emphasise greater equality, self-reliance, and people-participation.

5. Alternative Development Approach

The alternative development approach has been advocated by E.F Schumacher in his famous work 'Small is Beautiful'²⁴. The 'alternative development' approach is different from other approaches in that it offers an alternative to industrialization that would involve a significant de-industrialization of the mass-production economics of today and the introduction of self-reliant, small-scale technological systems in the Third World.

Schumacher proposes a 'technology of production by the masses' which is, as he says:

Conducive to decentralisation, compatible with the laws of ecology, gentle in its use of scarce resources, and designed to serve the human person instead of making him the servant of machines. I have named it intermediate technology, to signify that it is vastly superior to the primitive technology of bygone ages but at the same time much simpler, cheaper and free than the super technology of the rich.²⁵

Schumacher suggests that large scale industrial corporations should allow 50 percent of their equity capital to be held publicly by what he terms 'Social Councils', locally appointed groups made up of trade unionists, employers, and other community

members, who would use the share dividend revenue to invest in the vital social needs of the community, something which private capital could never be relied on to do. Private management would still run the company but would have to allow members of the council to inspect their books and observe Board meetings. Harrison argues that any attempt to promote development in the Third World, whether using intermediate technology or not, will only be successful if it meets the basic social requirement of encouraging local people to participate as fully as possible in the direction, planning and benefits of projects, though he adds that people still need “material and technical help from above”²⁶.

Sustainable Development

‘Sustainable Development’ was a major focus of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Brazil in June 1992. The achievement of sustainable development globally is likely to prove one of the greatest challenges to the world community in view of the continued population growth and rising levels of consumption per capita.

Meaning of Sustainable Development

The legacy of the concept of sustainable Development is attributed²⁷ to the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development entitled ‘Our common Future’²⁸ which defines it as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Thus it seeks to satisfy the compulsions of equity within generation of the humans and also of inter-generational equity”. ‘Sustainable development’ is development that meets the well being needs of present and future generation. It is concerned with evolution over a long period of time, focussing on stability issues and especially structural changes, that is, changes that result in qualitatively different characteristics of states or behaviour of the system under consideration²⁹ In essence, sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change, are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations³⁰.

In the past decade, however, a shift has taken place from partial environmental analysis to a focus on the global effects of environmental decay-reflected among other things in alarming phenomena such as flooding, acid rain, soil erosion, desertification, destruction of the ozone layer, ocean pollution, and resource extraction. Thus resource conservation and pollution control, once thought luxuries, are now recognised as essential to protect life supporting nations systems and to improve living standards. Leaders now increasingly recognise that socio-economic development must be sustainable -capable of meeting not only current needs but those of future generations as well.

The achievement of sustained development defined in terms of “meeting peoples’ current needs while preserving natures productive capacity for the future,” remains the greatest challenge to the world community. More than one billion people still live in acute poverty and suffer grossly inadequate access to the resources - education, health services, infrastructure land and credit - required to give them a chance for a better life³¹.

Secondly, the world’s population is growing about 1.7 percent annually - almost an addition of 100 million a year. This rapid population growth exacerbates the mutually reinforcing effects of poverty and environmental decay.

Thirdly, the challenge for water supply and sanitation will be to meet the backlog of demand while meeting the needs of growing populations.

Fourthly, the challenge for energy and industry will be to meet the projected growth in demand while controlling population and deforestation.

Fifthly, the challenge for agriculture will be to meet the projected demand for food while meeting the current needs of the people in developing countries.

Most developing countries have not yet achieved acceptable living standards for their peoples. Economic development and Social change that improve human welfare are urgently needed. Protecting the environment will be an important part of improving the well being of people today, as well as the well being of their children and grand children³².

Today, what is required is a more integrated approach towards solving an international environmental system which responds adequately to the development needs of developing countries in the context of growing environmental despoliation.

Development Administration

Since World War II the functions of government have increased in size and number. But with this, a serious imbalance has emerged between the hopes of the people and realities and between the needs of development and their fulfillment. This has resulted in a setback to national development. In order to carry out the growing functions of government, the administrative system, which until recently had only expansion, improvement or even basic reorganisation of the administrative system but also enhancement of the capabilities of administrators to orient them to the task of national development. This type of administrative system is currently termed 'development administration'. It is an interdisciplinary subject to respond to the development needs of developing countries.

To quote Shon-Sheng-Hsuch, "Development administration is essentially a public administration to maintain the general activity of the government as a going concern. On the other hand, development administration, as the expression implies, lays emphasis on that role of public administration which is to develop the activity of the government, especially in the economic, political and social fields"³³.

According to Edward W. Weidner, "development administration is concerned with maximising innovation for development." He defines innovation for development as "the process of planned or intended change in the direction of modernity or nation-building and socio-economic change"³⁴.

The concept of development administration has two major facets. One facet of it refers to 'development of administration'. By this we mean to develop administrators. It involves strengthening and improving administrative capabilities as a means for achieving development goals. The other facet is 'administration of development.' According to this interpretation, we expect development administration to act as an instrument in the implementation of development programmes, projects and policies. This may involve raising the standards of education, transforming social systems, improving public health, raising national income, stabilising political system, conserving national resources, improving communication system, constructing dams, power plants and undertaking many other developmental tasks of national importance³⁵.

Development of administration and administration of development are these two sides of the same coin. In this context, Fred W. Riggs aptly remarks:

“The reciprocal relatedness of these two sides involves a chicken and egg type of causations, administration can not normally be improved very much without changes in the environmental constraints that hamper its effectiveness; and the environment itself cannot be changed unless the administration of developmental programmes is strengthened”³⁶.

A group of American scholars under the chairmanship of F. W. Riggs formed the comparative Administrative group (CAG) to study exclusively the problems of administration in the development countries.

Development Administration may be defined “as the blending of all the elements and resources (human and physical) into a concerted effort to achieve agreed upon goals. It is the continuous cycle of formulating, evaluating and implementing interrelated plans, policies, programmes, projects, activities and other measures to reach established development objectives within a scheduled time”³⁷ For this, role of bureaucracy was conceived as crucial. But it was not Weberian classical ideal type of bureaucracy, but a development bureaucracy committed to the cause of development. So developed the ecological model of Riggs.

Riggs developed a structural functional approach on the basis of societal model. His ‘prismatic sala’ model tried to establish that differentiation of structures might be looked upon as an essence of development.

Characteristics of development administration

1. Capacity to accomplish specific goals;
2. Purpose to stimulate and facilitate defined programmes of social and economic progress;
3. Loyalty in terms to remain accountable to people;
4. Attitude in terms of positive and innovative outlook;
5. Public participation through decentralisation and power distribution;
6. Close nexus with politics.

A new era of state led, bureaucracy - directed and expert guided development enterprise was, particularly USA and other fund giving agencies to the fund-starved skill poor Third World Countries.

Points of criticism against development administration

1. It magnified the role of bureaucracy and underrated alternative development models.
2. It was responsible for maintaining the statusquo.
3. It was basically oriented towards Westernization.
4. It led to continuous economic dependence on the first world.

By late '60s and early '70s weaknesses of developmental administration became visible. It failed to remove poverty and social inequity and could not bridge over the gap between rich north and poor south.

In the '80s and '90s a 'New World order' has ushered in. The Western World itself is caught in serious economic crises. With the fall of the USSR capitalism itself has become competitive. Liberalisation, privatisation and international economic linkages are taking to be the newer steps to refurbish capitalism. The developing countries being caught up in the 'debt trap' are now compelled to follow dictation of the first world as to what would be their path of development. After the Second World War there was a tendency of decolonization. The 'New World Order' perhaps is driving to recolonization with the tendency to minimalism of state, are we going back to the days of Laissez faire? In the New World Order where there is a transition from State led development to market-led and market-friendly development, administration would have to change its outer cloak. Instead of giving more emphasis on bureaucracy, emphasis should be given on multiple institutional development. A people-oriented policy, local resource-based planning and active peoples' participation should be the new determinant of emergent development administration to face the challenges of the 'New World Order'.

Section-B : Impact of Development on District Administration

Development has become a major focus of administrative activity in the country today. There has been an increasing recognition in recent years in parliament, the press, academic quarters and the articulate interest groups of the need for gearing the administrative machinery to the new developmental tasks and responsibilities. The mounting failure in the implementation of schemes, plans and programmes, the growing dissatisfaction of the citizens with the administration, the slowing down of the rate of economic growth, the soaring prices, frequent droughts and similar other disquieting developments in more recent times have lent a new urgency to the problem of administrative re organisation and reform. Broadly speaking, the process of development consists of bringing about structural and behavioural change in the social, economic and political life of the people. The essence of development administration is holistic change undertaken through integrated, organized and properly directed Governmental action. Development administration, as a concept, connotes the totality of administrative processes involved in developmental activities.

In practical terms, development administration is that part of public administration, which is concerned with the realization of developmental goals, policies and programmes; development administration is essentially ‘an action oriented, goal-oriented administrative system’³⁸.

Development Administration is the uses of administration of further development³⁹. Specially, development administration is the task of organising and administering public agencies to facilitate and implement development programmes⁴⁰.

Developmental administration grew as an academic discipline when Western industrialised nations began to aid Third World development, using Government and public - sponsored institutions as agents of social change. Development was primarily viewed as economic administration, with little concern for an equitable distribution of social benefits.

Today, development administration is less bound to Western Approaches to development. The focus is on indigeneous development, which is sustainable, and which meets the basic needs of the people. The focus of development administration has changed over the years, keeping pace with new development theorising. Once confined

to the deployment of foreign aid, development administration today focuses on planned change to meet a nation's broad political, economic, social, and cultural objectives⁴¹.

Non-governmental, non bureaucratic, religious, cultural, voluntary, and Community organisations are now increasingly involved in development projects. Localised, decentralised and participative approaches to development are encouraged.

The development task facing administrators in the Third World is an enormously complicated one.. Here, the administrator is expected to allocate the scarce resources for development among sectors that all claim the highest priority, to increase foreign exchange earnings through export to markets that are all but closed to the free flow of goods and services, to feed the rapidly growing populations in the face of persisting difficulties on the agricultural front, to deliver inputs and services for development to the very poor in distant rural areas who do not seem very enthusiastic to participate in development programmes specially designed for them. To be effective, the administrator must learn to work with the people and stimulate changes in societies that have for long remained stagnant. To overcome administrative inadequacies, governments in the developing countries need seriously to adopt appropriate steps to improve their administrative systems. Small measures, will suffice no more. It will not be possible to make discernible progress without devoting to this task the attention it deserves. A successful response to the development challenge calls for a genuine commitment to administrative development and must include a variety of concrete measures to promote it. Nothing short of such a dynamic approach can hope to succeed in realising all the development objectives.

In this context, a recent resolution of the economic and social council of the United Nations is of very special significance, The resolution calls upon the 'The Specialised Agencies to recognise that increased administrative capability for developing countries is indispensable for meeting their needs in the 1980's requiring action at national and international levels to create such capability⁴². Echoing this concern, a group of development administration experts at a UN meeting urged that the international development strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade should draw the attention of developing countries to the urgency of enhancing their institutional and managerial capabilities to meet the challenges of development in the 1980s and beyond.'

The study of development attracted attention of many scholars. Desai conducted a survey in two villages in 1961 which described in some detail, the organisation and working of different departments and also of the village panchayats and the cooperatives, and included, wherever possible, the data on the response of the people to the working of these agencies, the defects found in their working, and the suggestions for their improvement⁴⁴. Avasthi's case study examined the working of the Community Development Programme in a block. Its objective was to find out the manner in which the administrative machinery served the goals of the Community development and the impediments that it faced⁴⁵. In his study, Sharma investigated the working of village panchayats in order to find out the extent to which the constitution, functions, financial resources and actual working of the panchayats were satisfactory and adequate from the point of view of the role envisaged for the panchayats in planning and implementation of development schemes⁴⁶.

Perhaps the first theoretical paper on the subject of developmental administration with reference to Indian Constitution is by Pai Panandikar⁴⁷. He observed that to meet the present day objectives "the structural, organisational and behavioural elements may have to be carefully assessed, measured and incorporated in an administrative set up designed to assimilate them and generate the requisite output"⁴⁸. Following this article it is found that a number of publications directly or indirectly dealing with the subject of development administration. The main contributions on the subject were by Bhalerao, Dean, Kicloch, Ricger, Seshadri, Ghildyal and Khosla.

Khosla raised the question of values, motivation and attitudes of the civil service entrusted with developmental tasks. He observed that the attitudes of the civil service were dominated by procedural rigidities of the law and order state and had not changed to meet the demands of new developmental responsibilities⁴⁹. In his two articles published in 1964 and 1966, Dube had earlier drawn attention to this problem. He observed, "Its (bureaucracy's) structure and ethos suited it more for maintenance of law and order than for massive nation building; its adaptation to the emerging milieu has been beset with organisational in capabilities, psychological resistances, and value conflicts."⁵⁰.

He suggested systematic studies of the processes of public administration to detect pathologies and dysfunctions of bureaucracy. Majumdar also pleaded for sociological studies of Indian bureaucracy enquiry into organisational pattern, values

and attitudes of bureaucrats and the relationship between administrative bureaucracy, political groups, and voluntary organisation⁵¹.

Early in 1966, the Indian Institute of Public Administration organised a seminar on "Agricultural Administration in India." In his inaugural address, Shri C. Subramaniam raised many questions such as the role and functions of VLW and his competence to handle the responsibility of transmission of new knowledge to farmers, co-operative credit institutions in agricultural extension, innovation in agricultural administration, need for basic changes in the structure and procedures which control the flow of agricultural credit, and the problems of union-state relationship.

The Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi, organised a seminar on development administration in 1967. The Seminar Report entitled "Impediments to Development" carried papers on the diagnosis of the problem of development from the standpoint of all major social science disciplines and offered a large corpus of source material for further study and research by social scientists.

The Deptt. of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Saugar, also organised a seminar on the subject of development in 1968. Of the many papers submitted in this seminar, two have special interest in this context "Bureaucracy and Economic Development" by Dube, and "Innovation in Administration for Economic Development" by Avasthi. Dube discussed the main contribution of bureaucracy in the process of economic development, the relationships of bureaucracy with the party in power, elite and the masses, the dysfunctional nature of bureaucracy in the context of the developmental situation, and some directions for reforms in order to rid the bureaucratic structure of these dysfunctions. Avasthi examined the existing bureaucratic structure in India and observed that adequate attention had not been given to the middle and lower management levels, and also to the expert and the technician and that there was excessive centralisation of authority and control and too much of paper processing.

Two aspects of development administration deserve special attention. First, development administration in the context of our political system has to be conceived in terms of democratic processes. In other words, our national goals of development have to be achieved with the close cooperation and participation of the people in the development effort. Secondly, as we have already seen, one of the purposes of development administration obviously is to strengthen and expand the social and political

infrastructures with the object of creating new resources for development, including the basic resource of the will to develop. The functions of development administration may be divided into the following six categories:

1. Formulation of development goals and policies.
2. Programme formulation and programme/profit management.
3. Reorganisation of administrative structures and procedures.
4. Evaluation of results.
5. People's participation in the development effort.
6. Promoting growth of social and political infrastructure.

District Administration since independence has presented the twin features of continuity and change. This seeming paradox may perhaps be resolved by a closer look at the functioning of the administration in the district.

The development of the country as a state policy and responsibility truly grew only around the fifties. The First Five Year Plan without seeking to define development administration in fact provided the broad parameter by stating that "the economic condition of a country at any given time is a product of the broader social environment, and economic planning has to be viewed as an integral part of a wider process aiming not merely at the development of resources in a narrow technical sense but at the development of human faculties and the building up of an institutional framework adequate to the needs and aspirations of the people."⁵²

The Community development was essentially an administrative activity though intended to be organised with the cooperation of the people. Aptly this was followed by the Panchayati Raj system following the report of the Balwantrai Committee⁵³.

In many ways this was a revolutionary step in the sense that following this report, several states went on a system of decentralised democracy involving the people's representatives not only in form but accompanied by much wider decision making powers and authority.

While administration pertaining to development programmes and projects offers a great deal of scope for the use of advanced techniques of analysis, it is important to

see this entire area in its relationship to general administration. The character of the prevailing structure of general administration has a decision influence on the strength and weakness of development administration. This is because of the links between general and development administration, it is important also to underline the distinctive features of development administration. There is the preliminary point that because of resources which are specially made available for development by way of central loans and grants, the centre has a certain role in the administration of development which is more continuing and more detailed than its interest in problems of general administration in the states. Leaving aside the question of finances of development and the administrative implication which follow, three distinctions which exist between general and development administration may be mentioned.

In all branches of administration there is an element of hierarchy and of levels of responsibility. But if the lines of authority as they operate in revenue administration or police administration were to prevail in the field of development, it would be extremely difficult to draw the potential knowledge and creative capacities of individuals working at different levels into the general scheme of development.

The second distinction between general and development administration is that when there is so much to be done, and development embraces a very wide range of activities, the only way work can get done is to divide it between a number of agencies. Therefore, ways have to be found for achieving coordination between many agencies engaged in allied and complementary tasks.

The third special feature of development administration is that in development many agencies and institutions which do not belong to the structure of the administration have a vital role to fill. Examples of this are the cooperative movement, voluntary organisation, institutions for research and teaching and trade unions.

The pronounced feature of development administration has been the magnitude of its expansion both qualitative and quantitative. As the demands of the nation have grown in different sectors, the tendency as well as policy has been not only to promote the development of these sectors but also to directly participate in them. New activities, new functions, and new tasks become the qualitative growth in development administration. On the other hand, the sheer size of the development tasks have continued to grow with the expanding economy as well as the polity.

However, it is a long way since independence when the only organisation pattern available was the departmental undertaking, exclusively under the tutelage of the civil service. Many other organisational patterns have been evolved. These range from joint stock companies, to autonomous organisations to the controversial and much discussed holding company.

Changes in this traditional system are, however, inevitable even though not entirely imminent. Two key factors are likely to play their part in this. First of all the increasing democratization of the country will necessitate a great degree of political control over administrative decision making at lower levels of state administration. Secondly, the development administration will press towards performance as against institutional structures. This pressure for performance will undoubtedly make the administrative system bring about changes in its internal working without which performance will be rather difficult.

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. Such challenges were regulated at least in two different directions. First, the large scale expansion in the administrative activities at the district level resulted in the proliferation of the functional and technical departments and units necessitating diverse specialised and technical human skills and resources. Second, the district collector would now have to function within the framework of a parliamentary democratic system and along with local institutions like the Panchayati Raj. Other local government bodies, cooperatives and others which had come into existence in the wake of the adoption of the ideals of a welfare state, democratic decentralization and the need for development at the grass root level. These changes have brought the system face to face with a large number of politicians and a variety of political forces, challenging the traditional homogeneity of the district administrator and the authority of the district collector. As noted by a group of scholars the system of administration at the district level passed from an 'integrated stage into a 'differentiated stage'.

The impact of many development programmes has not been felt because, in their implementation, there is greater pre-occupation with expenditure, inputs and outputs than with the realization of the goals which the programmes have to achieve. While techniques relevant to the new functions of planning and development have not been

introduced, the routine functions are neglected. In recent years, there have been more frequent breakdowns in law and order. As a result, officers at the sub-division and district levels have less time for developmental work and have to spend their time on law and order problems. The sub-divisional officers play hardly any active role in the new programmes, on the allibi- that they are busy with law and order and revenue collection. They forget that often there is a close connection between law and order and the quality of administration. If the development programmes are properly implemented and the normal administrative machinery works in an efficient manner, the problems of law and order would be less severe.

Although state governments have adopted different structures for development, the West Bengal model has been acknowledged as one of the most practical models because it integrates the Panchayati Raj Institutions with the existing structures of district administration.

It is the view of CAARD that along with the establishment of the office of District Development Commissioner, a significant restructuring of planning and implementation machinery at the district level should also take place. The proliferation of development programmes with their own verticle structures and the excessive departmentalisation at the district level have been found to be counterproductive to integrated and coordinated development. There should be a clear demarcation between the planning functions at the state level and the district level. The Planning Commission's working group had emphasised this aspect and has called it "functional decentralisation". The district plan should be the product of a well conceived and well debated exercise taking full note of the local aspirations and local needs of the district community.

Functional Components of District Administration

District administration is organised on the principle, of functional specialisation. The tasks are divided into their constituent functions and assigned to different functionaries. Thus, administrative tasks are separated into several departments like irrigation, food and civil supplies, animal husbandry, cooperation, agriculture, industries, police, medical, and public health and others. Each of these departments is further sub-divided into smaller segments based on its activities. When an organisation becomes

large, as in the case of a district, targets have to be planned for each segment so that they function in harmony with one another.

According to S.S. Khera "District administration is the total functioning of government in a district; that total and complex organisation of the management of public affairs at work, dynamic and not static, in the territory of a geographically demarcated district"⁵⁴.

District Administration includes all the agencies of government, the individual officials and functionaries, public servants, including a public servant who is a government servant and equally one who is not. For the term public servant included many who are not government servants as such. It comprehends all institutions for the management of public affairs in the district, all the bodies corporate such as the panchayats of different kinds, the gram sabhas, the nyaya panchayats, the panchayat samities, the Zilla Parishads, municipal committees and local boards of every kind. It includes all advisory bodies associated with the administration, as well as individuals serving in such ways as assessors and jurors in the trial cases.

District administration provides the principal points of contact between the citizen and the processes of government. It is truly the cutting edge of the tool of public administration and that is what constitutes its vital significance in the nations government. According to the government of India's Administrative Reform Commission (1969) Report on District Administration - the functions of district administration can be grouped under nine broad headings. The first group of functions of district administration concern public safety and tranquility. This group includes the maintenance of law and order, control of crime and administration of justice. The second group, for convenience again, may be called the revenue and excise group. Revenue and Excise go together, and are concerned with the assessment and collection of taxes and duties of different kinds. Revenue includes land revenue, irrigation dues, income-tax, agricultural income tax where it is levied, sales tax, stamps, court fees, entertainment tax, taxes on motor vehicles and others. In this group can also be included connected subjects like land reforms, land acquisition, consolidation of agricultural holdings and management of estates under the court of wards Act. It is the collector, who is mainly concerned with all these activities.

Under development, the most important group of functions are those concerning agricultural production. This includes agricultural, irrigation, cooperation, animal husbandry and fisheries. Each of these activities is in the charge of a specialist officer at the district level.

In the fourth group we may include the other development functions of district administration, viz., welfare activities. These include public health, education, social welfare, backward classes and communications.

Food and supplies stand in a category by themselves. This is the area of control mechanisms which have come into being moreover the last twenty years or so than in any previous period. Generally this task is assigned to the collector, who has a separate organisation under his control. These functions concern themselves with food grains and articles of daily consumption like kerosene, coal, oil, iron and steel, cement etc.

The sixth group of functions concern the holding of elections to parliament, the state legislatures and local bodies. These functions are directly under the collector, who is responsible for the proper observance of the process of elections right from the registration of voters to the declaration of results of the elections. Much of the work is carried out through staff drawn from other departments functioning in the district.

The seventh group concerns the administration of local bodies, both urban and rural. Municipalities are units of local government and are to a large extent independent of district administration, but the collector is generally responsible for their supervision and proper functioning. Towards this end, in most states, he has been given certain powers of control. In respect of rural local governments, in those states which have fully implemented panchayati raj, the links with the collector are of a varied nature.

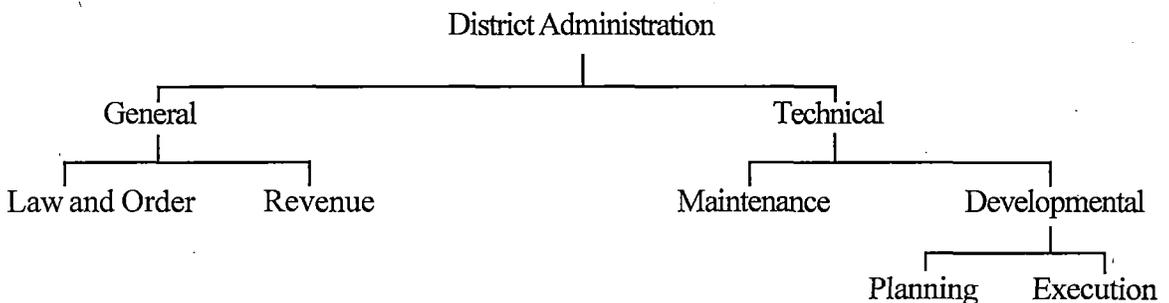
The eighth group of functions concern emergencies and natural calamities, while some areas of the country may be more prone to floods or famines, such occurrences are common in most districts of the country. If such a situation arises, the collector is required to assume charge and take appropriate steps to alleviate the suffering of the people.

Finally, the district administration exercises the undefined executive function of government. It falls to the lot of the collector, in his capacity as the chief representative of government in the district, to deal with all residuary matters. In this group, we may also include miscellaneous functions like collections under the small savings scheme, contribution to public loans etc.⁵⁵.

There are three types of functions which administration at the district and lower level performs:

1. Regulatory functions;
2. Maintenance functions; and
3. Developmental functions.

The following chart gives a generalised picture of the situation:



Under the British colonial rule, the deputy commissioner discharged three primary functions of government; as 'district magistrate' he was responsible for maintaining law and order, as 'collector' he headed revenue administration of the district and collected revenue and other dues and as 'deputy commissioner' he was the executive head of the district administration and coordinating authority for all departments of the government. After independence too he retained all the three functions but their character underwent a great change in the context of development programmes envisaged in the successive five year plans. Maintenance of law and order though still an important function does not claim a high priority in times of peace and reconstruction.

As collector he has, of course, to collect government revenue and dues but his involvement in the implementation of land reforms legislations, he has also become overwhelmingly developmental. He is responsible for increasing food production and implementations of five year plan programmes and developmental schemes by himself, playing the role of a coordination among different departments and agencies of the government. He has also become the friend and guide of rural local development through panchayati Raj institution.

The developmental functions at the district level can be divided into four groups:⁵⁶

- (i) Functions carried out by the District Planning Officer;
- (ii) Functions carried out by various technical department;
- (iii) Functions carried out by the B.D.O and his colleagues;
- (iv) Functions carried out by special agencies created for specific programmes and projects.

In all the cases, the Deputy Commissioner is the co-ordinating agency. The District Planning officer prepares the annual and five year plans, revises them and submits them to the Deputy Commissioner and state authority. He is also a liaison between the Deputy Commissioner and various technical departments in matters of planned schemes. As regards the technical departments at the district level, they are under the direct control of their respective superiors at the divisional or state levels.

Khera has marked one feature that the general structure of the administration in the district is in a series of tiers, usually three, sometimes four tiers. There will be one level which comprehends the whole district within its jurisdiction. It may be the collector, the district magistrate, or the superintendent of police or the district agricultural officer; it may be the chairman of the zilla parishad, or the district education officer, or the health officer, and so on. Some functionary tends to contain the district as a whole within his particular functional jurisdiction.

Khera broadly agreed with the views expressed by the ARC and UP Commission, and defined the District Administration as the totality of government functioning in a district", "The totality of government concept has been elaborately explained by Mohit Bhattacharya, Iswar Dayal, and Kuldeep Mathur in their work- "District Administration: Organisation for reform-" that "the wide range of functions undertaken at the district level gives rise to a complex administrative structure - called the District

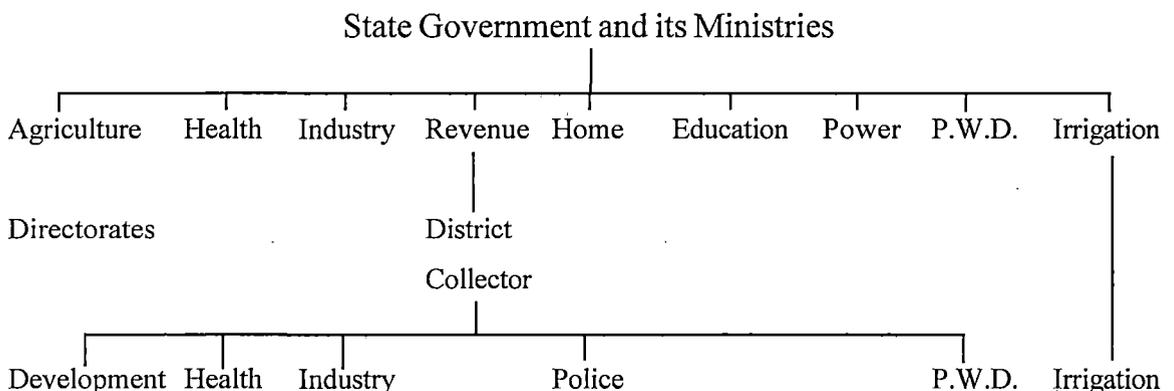
Administration- which is actually a collection of departments at one point in space.” They described the District Administration as “ a hierarchial system of State Administration with a pre-eminent role of the District Collector and Magistrate”. But this hierarchial system of state administration consists of several departments many of which have their own distinct entity while being associated with the District Administration in same way. The tasks of the department are interdependent, delay in one would cause delay in the other sequential operations. Hence each must operate in harmony with the others. At present this inter dependence tasks are performed by different departments and there is much complaint about delays in sequentially related tasks. Tensions develop among the departments. As a reaction of the hardening of feelings, the services to the public fall out and the purpose for which the departments are created is poorly served.

This chapter suggests a pattern for district administration and identifies the sub-systems necessary to perform its tasks effectively.

One consequence of this close links is that the collectorate system has fallen open to the influence of the state level directorates and in some cases autonomous political bodies, such as co-operatives, welfare boards etc. As a result of vertical control by departments that are beyond the immediate command of the collector has become so delicate that, in several ways, it is difficult to manage. The work organisation in the district and its links with state directorates are schematically shown in chart-I⁵⁷.

Chart - I

Partial Chart of State and District level Department



Allocation of financial resources for work at the district level rests with the state level directorate and not with the concerned district department or the collectorate. The district authorities are allowed to re-allocate budgets between the blocks according to their judgement of the situation, but state level departments have the controlling interest in district level departments even though the responsibility for supervision in most cases is vested in the district collector, the respective influence of the state department and the collector varies according to the seniority and standing of the collector as an individual in the State Governmental milieu. Obtaining a balance between the various pulls and pressures that prevail among the officers in the district and between departments at district and state levels, is complex and the task of creating a work team at district level is almost self-defeating.

The leadership role of the District Collector is rendered very difficult by the combined effects of the organisation of work, the budgetary allocation and responsibility for expenditure, and the personnel administration. Besides these aspects, the influence of the elected representatives and the Panchayati Raj creates an extremely involved decision making apparatus in district administration.

There should be an organisational design of district administration which depends upon the kind of work it is to perform and must be suited to carry out the particular task. Its effectiveness should be measured in terms of the degree of excellence it achieves in the purpose for which it is created, Organisation is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve a goal or a set of goals. The organisation should attempt to achieve the following:⁵⁸

1. Concern for results at district level. The management of tasks should have to be so arranged that measures can be developed to assess results.
2. The responsibility and authority of various functionaries are so determined that expectations may be fulfilled.
3. Conditions are expected so that interdepartmental cooperation, as against competition, is easily possible.
4. The needed degree of flexibility within administrative departments is provided so that its organisation is appropriate, to the extent possible, for the task it must perform.

5. Rolls are defined in such a way that they support the achievement of the basic purpose rather than hinder it. The roles of the specialist, the generalist and the elected representative respectively, should be so arranged that they provide their respective expertise in areas where each can contribute his best.

The frame that has been used by Dayal, Mathur and Bhattacharja for analysing district administration in the Socio-technical systems concept, viewing the organisation as an open system (Miller and Rice 1967; Emery and Trist, 1960). The socio-technical systems approach suggests that organisational design must offer the best fit for the nature of the tasks and its social system. Rice (1958,1963) has shown that it is the group as a social unit that best performs interdependent tasks, providing the best fit between the technology of the task and its social organisation. The socio-technical systems approach suggests that the technical and social-requirements of a task should be congruent. For matching these requirements, the research findings on the behaviour of individual group and society and the interactions among them are important data for designing a viable work organisation. As the total task in a large organization can not be performed by a single person, and it has to be divided for administrative convenience into manageable sub-units, the method of sub-dividing the total into its segments is important.

The socio-technical systems approach postulates that managerial command should include as complete a segment of the task as possible. The manager would be able to supervise the task only if he can command the totality of what resources are brought into the organisation (import), processing of these resources (conversion) and sending away what is converted outside its own work system (export). The organisational analysis is facilitated by conceptualising work as a totality consisting of import-conversion-export. The organisation 'imports materials, transforms them by means of conversion processes, consumes some of the products of conversion for internal maintenance and exports the rest'. This process can always be identified in the total organisation of its sub systems.

The socio-technical systems approach uses the rationale of a boundary, or a system control, for separating sub-units of the organisation. Sub-systems boundaries are likely to be necessary where the technology of a task differs from that of the others as in a multi-task organisation like the district. In a complex organisation, there are numerous

system boundaries due to the differentiation of one operating activity from another, or separation caused at import, conversion or export functions. In a complex work system, each type of activity may have several orders of differentiation. For instance, major operating systems may be differentiated into many sub-operating systems, each being separated on account of territory or time and, also sometimes, technology. The boundary control role, or the gatekeeping function, is crucial to the satisfactory performance of the total system.

A Model for District Administration

The purpose of district administration is to achieve the growth and development of the community in a district. The administrative organisation is the tool with which to achieve objective. Hence it must have a structure that will facilitate the achieving of the objective. The progress made towards the stated objective is the measure of the effectiveness of the administration and the suitability of its organisation. The indicators of social, economic and political growth have to be specific and measurable and clearly laid down by the State Government in the plans for the district. Social growth would generally mean that the society develops internal strength and the means for educating itself, for regulating its affairs, for following the religious sentiments of cooperation and concern for the well being of all. Economic Growth is measured by the improvement in the standard and the quality of life and dispersion of income among its members or families. Political growth refers to the individual's awareness of his rights as a citizen and exercising this right to strengthen the community's representation.

It is necessary to define the areas in which the representative, the administration and the citizen can each make the best contribution towards the achievement of the district's goals.

The involvement of the representative and the citizen must prevail in the following three areas: ⁵⁹

- (i) Decision making on policy matters .
- (ii) Citizen grievances .
- (iii) Citizen consultation.

- (i) The Zilla Parishad is responsible for policy decisions on community matters within the broad framework of the national policy. It's role is significant in three ways. It represents the people and their aspirations. In its representative role it must systematically maintain contact with people to keep itself alive to their aspirations in the district and to seek public support for public programmes. The Zilla Parishad should be responsible for articulating the context of the economic, social and political growth of the district and its people and lay down plan priorities; etc. It must perform a linking role between the political and the administrative systems at the district level.
- (ii) The grievances of a citizen must invariably arise from neglect or from a decision or action of a civil servant. The administrative organisation must therefore provide scope for redressal of citizen grievances at the higher levels of the administrative hierarchy.
- (iii) Citizen consultation in community affairs is best achieved through committees appointed for specific issues and citizen aspirations need to be formalised in a designated body for the purpose.

In a complex organisation such as a district, a wide network of relationships is necessary and a balance between the various functionaries - the representative, the administrator and the specialist must be maintained. The present model emphasizes that the representative should have superintending role so far as the goal setting and goal achievement tasks are concerned. The State Government has a supervisory task to ensure that administration can perform the tasks well enough to achieve the agreed results. The specialists have to ensure that technology and innovation in their fields are used towards the optimization of administration.

The Zilla Parishad has a representative role. It is responsible for determining what realistic goals should be set for the community, and what resources must be obtained from the State and the Central Governments. They are best placed to articulate the aspirations of the people and translate them into corrective plan and action.

Zilla Parishad would have to review what has been achieved and study the deviations to determine what kind of corrective action should be taken to ensure achievement of goals. The Zilla Parishad is mainly concerned with overall issues and planning for the

total district and review of overall results and not with day-to-day aspects of administration.

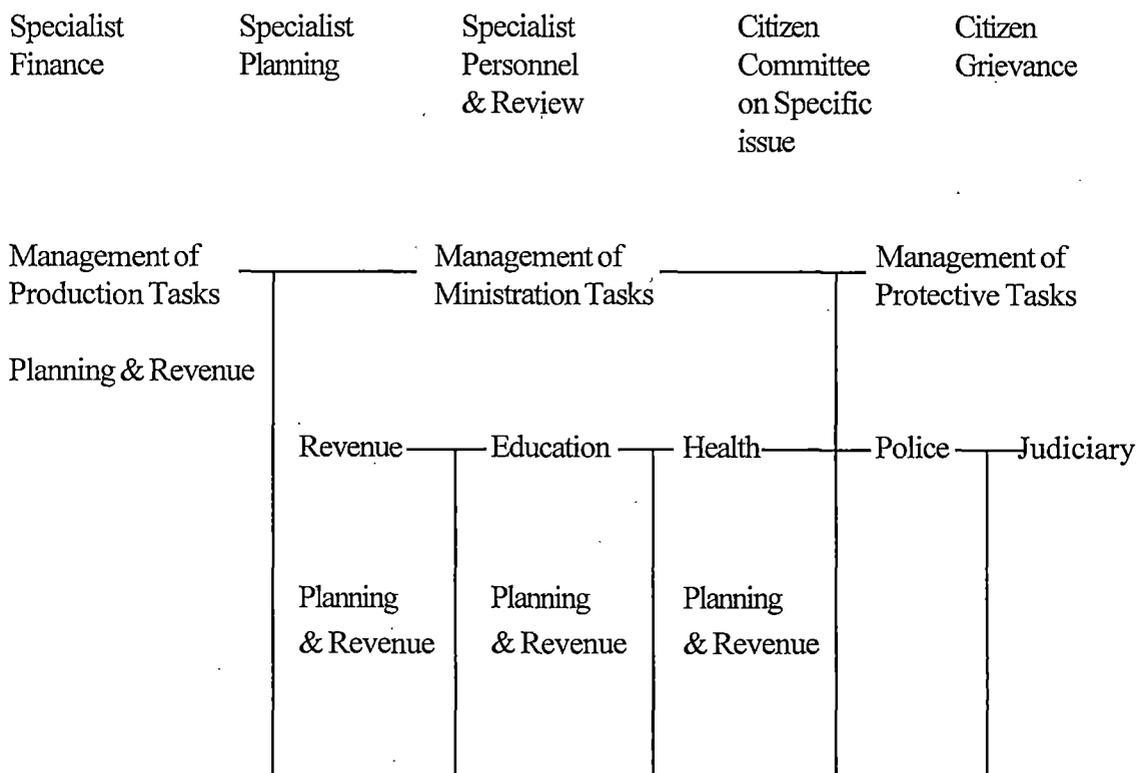
The District Collector as chief executive of the district is responsible for overall management of the area to ensure that the various components of administration function in such a way that the planned results are achieved and the people engaged in these tasks are satisfied.

Brown⁶⁰ (1971) suggests that an organisation needs two kinds of specialised knowledge, one relating to programming and the other to personnel decisions. He suggests that a specialist is needed to apply the latest knowledge in improving methods of doing work and of using people effectively to achieve optimum results.

The design of the total administrative organisation at the district level can be shown in chart II.

Chart - II⁶¹

**Zilla Parishad
District Management**



Section-C : Problems of District Administration

The district as the principal focal point in field administration was formally postulated by the Planning Commission itself as long ago as 1969. It was to be the institutional strong point for decentralised planning with the public participation. But, as the Planning Commission has admitted in 1978, it has never been implemented in an orderly fashion.

In the new effort towards decentralised planning, while the block, as a reasonably homogeneous sector, will be the primary area for local planning, the block level planning will have to be built into a frame of district level planning. As the block level is the administratively convenient link between the village and the district level, so is the district the convenient link between any truly grass root planning at the block level on the one hand, and the State level administration where the state plans must be coordinated, and in turn linked up with the national level planning in the central government and the Planning Commission.

It is often said, quite rightly, that if districts were well administered, India would be well governed. For in the Indian scheme of administration, district administration has a crucial role to play, During the British rule, a great deal of reliance was placed on the District officer as the man on the spot. He was supported, as a rule in his actions in dealing with local situations and problems. After Independence, the role of the administrative system changed in the context of two major factors, namely, democracy and development. The administrative machinery had to function as an instrument of the democratic state, and its main goal was not just maintenance of law and order or collection of revenue but also local development in all its aspects.

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 Scheduled tribes. 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 Panchayati Raj and Cooperative institutions. Above all, the struggle has become grim as a result of growing pressure on land. The need for the provision of employment opportunities in the non-farm sector has become acute. In fact, pressures on district administration have increased in all sides and the district officers have starting feeling that to survive they need not only traditional administrative skills but also semi-political manipulation skills. In the wake of the proliferation of its functions, the work load of district administration has grown and the number of functionaries has gone up. In the earlier days of community development and Panchayati Raj, a great deal of genuine enthusiasm was generated in securing the people's participation in development programmes. In the sixties, the emphasis rightly shifted to more concrete tasks of increased agricultural production and in the seventies, to anti-poverty programmes. These programme involving the masses require their mobilization. It is felt that the district development administration has not been able, for several reasons, to evoke mass enthusiasm about development programmes⁶².

After the initial euphoria, Panchayati Raj suffered a decline from which it has not yet recovered. There has been no ground-swell in favour of Panchayati Raj institutions. In several states, such institutions stand superseded and their work is indifferently supervised by the administration. In some others, they have been bypassed and new agencies like the Rural Development Societies, have been constituted to implement the integrated rural development programme.

However, these organisations are in fact, old wine in new bottles since they consist of district officers hardly likely to rouse mass enthusiasm. Secondly, the competence of district administration to undertake development planning has not increased in most states. Projects are not prepared properly, not completed in time. District Planning in most states remain only a concept.

The distance between the people and district administration seems to have increased. The district officers nowadays always engaged with district headquarters. Many block officers live at the district headquarters and this too has led to the neglect of functions at the village level. New officials have been appointed, new agencies including rural banks have been set up but, rather than strengthening administrative capabilities they have created problems of coordination⁶³.

Growing departmentalism and political pulls and pressures have created dissonance. To be effective district administration must have a unity of purpose and approach which is becoming increasingly difficult to attain.

Given the centrality of the district it is not surprising that much attention has been focused on how the system should be organised at this level to best further the government's institutions. In general, the debate has centered around whether the District Magistrate should or should not directly control the functions of the other departments of the district. Also under debate has been the issue of whether the development activities should be carried out through the departments of the government or through the elected local bodies at the district level. Throughout this debate one factor has remained constant, namely, the primacy of the district magistrate as the principal representative of the government in the district.

The 'Man on the spot' today is a much harassed person. The range and complexity of functional responsibilities have increased enormously without any commensurate improvement in the administrative infrastructure. The expectations from him are high while the power and facilities at the disposal have remained totally inadequate.

The collector is expected to provide leadership in the formulation and implementation of various development and welfare programmes, as also to coordinate and monitor the activities of the different departments for agencies involved in them. There are also special welfare programmes for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and traditional development programmes based on land reforms.

There are, of course, a number of departments, agencies and officials in charge of these programmes, but the traditional set up of district administration is such that no programme of this nature can really make much headway unless the collector demonstrates personal knowledge, and interest, in it. Moreover, these programmes have not substituted but only supplemented his pre-independence responsibilities.

A basic anomaly that characterises the relationships of the departments studied at the district level is that while the larger system expects them to cooperate and coordinate their actions, the departments themselves do not sufficiently accept interdependence. Consequently, they find themselves in either resource-dependent or domain related conflicts, which they believe only regulation can mediate. Yet when conflict and poor

coordination prevent the sectors from meeting certain programme requirements, they victimize each other and also feel powerless in the system⁶⁴.

The important characteristic of the action-set in the district is that the administration, both by design and common perception, is at the hub of the network, with the district magistrate functioning as the prime mover. However, a principal problem with the District Magistrate's role is that it is more often defined by exception than by logical structuring. He is expected to do everything that the other agencies in the district have not been asked to do. As a consequence, both his responsibilities and authority are much too diffuse, creating a sense of ambiguity. Therefore, the role is necessarily defined by the role-incumbent based on his own personnel needs, perceptions, predictions and experience. While such role definition normally occurs in any position in any structure, in the case of the district magistrate it is much more dependent on the individual than is otherwise common or necessary. As a result, given the centrality of this role, the role definition becomes a problem because, in addition to the district magistrate himself, the other departments, too have a considerable stake in this role. Each department has its own particular expectations of this role and, therefore, each defines it in its own terms and incorporates in that definition its own peculiar demands. In the final analysis, when expectations from these various directions fail to be reconciled, the generation of personality based conflicts becomes inevitable.

In this, situation, expectation could be made more realistic through a process of exploration. To explore expectations and outcomes, the district magistrate and the heads of other departments are expected to meet frequently. It is only through a multilateral exchange that a collective perspective, a common ethos, and a shared sense of direction can emerge.

In the case of official meetings, rarely do the heads of all the departments involved come together even for so critical an activity as disaster planning in disaster-prone districts. Various committee meetings are more often characterised by compliance with procedure than by interaction, with the representatives attending more out of compulsion than from willingness to participate. Perceptions regarding the convening of a committee meeting often differs. The heads of departments are represented by their juniors. Furthermore, there is little continuity with regard to the representative himself. A different person is likely to be present at each meeting. As a result, the

District Plan implementation Committee presents a pattern of mechanical exchange of limited information, low participation, and little commitment.

Most of the departments being unwilling to get away from their system of line administration, their district-level officers look upon the collector merely as a first among many equals and do not always graciously accept his role as coordinator. The proliferation of agencies and introduction of banking institutions have made things all the more complicated. The collector often finds this a delicate as well as a difficult task and has occasionally utilised the clout of the local Minister to bring about effective coordination. Moreover, he has to function under constant watch by the people and their representative. Long hours and mounting tension gradually lead to the inevitable fatigue⁶⁵.

The Balwantrai Mehta Committee made a serious attempt to conceptualise the entire system of district administration in the context of the primary tasks of a developing nation. The fact that political interests succeeded in derailing implementation of its recommendations exposes the hollowness of political pretensions rather than any inherent imperfections in the scheme itself. If nothing else, it should be re-examined to plug loopholes. District administration must be conceptualized as a whole. Sectoral commissions tend to get sidetracked in such issues as powers and status, and consequently miss the point that each activity in the district should get somewhere in the whole picture.

The functional relationship between the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of police in a district is largely determined by the provisions of the Police Act 1861. Admittedly, both for the purposes of administration and planning the district serves as a vital unit and the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police constitute integral parts of its administrative set up. Over a period of time, the district magistrate has assumed a role of authority, command and control over the police in the name of maintaining law and order in the district. A careful perusal of the police manual in the light of built in conventions and practices would amply corroborate that the District Magistrate has come to wield considerable authority to interfere with the internal management of the district police organisation. This sort of subordination might not have been contemplated in the present law which rests the administration of the police force in a district solely in the Superintendent of Police.

The relationship between the Magistracy and the police is governed by para 2 of section 4 of the Act lays down that the Superintendent of Police has to function under “general control and direction” of the district magistrate⁶⁶. Most aspects of the preventive action initiated by the police are justiciable and the police has to remain accountable for its action before court. This negates the necessity of placing police work under unfettered executive supervision. The provision may lead to distortion of police performance and dilution of police accountability to the law of the land. The activities of the police in maintaining public order and controlling crime to the extent to which such action is essential to lay foundation for orderly development is a matter which should concern the authorities in charge of development processes. Hence, a measure of local coordination of police activity with other departments and by the district officer is essential.

There is, however, the need for grappling with the problems inherent in such coordination. It is suggested that for the sake of continuity in administration the district magistrate has to act as principal coordinator of government activities. The one-line method of administration with functionaries of each department concerned has to be replaced by way of formal coordination through the office of district magistrate. Certain attributes of general administration are experience-specific and cannot be found among officers belonging to other services of the government working at the district level⁶⁷.

The pattern of supervisory authority and control of the collector can be said to have a theoretical basis in what is called ‘dual hierarchy’ which according to Dimock and Dimock, “is so far the best method of solving the problems of coordination”⁶⁸. John D. Millet is of opinion that “only in the theory of dual supervision will we find the means of building an integrated field structure for administrative operations”⁶⁹. It rests on a dichotomy between the specialist and the generalist and assumes a dual set of loyalties from the bottom up.” The crux of the problem,” remark Dimock and Dimock, “is that certain officers must be ‘administratively’ responsible to one superior and ‘technically’ responsible to another”⁷⁰.

Nirupam Som, the former Director General of Police in West Bengal, proposes certain steps for the healthy relationship between D.M and S.P⁷¹. First, the State government should take into consideration the respective authority of a D.M and S.P before they are posted to a particular district. They should be selected from an equal or

near equal stage of seniority of service so that no officer has the feeling that his counterpart is too junior to tender any advice to him or is so senior that his ideas are too rigid and he has a one-track mind.

Secondly, the D.M and the S.P should make frequent personal contact with each other in order to decide on various issues relating to crime, maintenance of law and order, and other important matters in the district.

Thirdly, certain provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, The Police Act, the West Bengal National Volunteer Force Act require the approval of the D.M for issue of traffic notifications, prohibitory orders, etc., on the basis of proposals initiated by the S.P. It is suggested that in such matters the S.Ps proposals should be dealt with promptly by the D.Ms office. National Police Commission suggested for equality in pay and parity in career prospects of the IPS with the IAS though some differential in pay structure is allowed to persist even now it is highly desirable that, by and large, almost identical seniority in both the services - IAS and IPS - should be followed in posting of officers in a district. Otherwise, the possibility of jeopardising the entire scheme of district administration can not be ruled out.

It is evident that the absence of cooperative relationships results in the varying away of the district level performance from its stake holders, instead, the energies of the system tend to concentrated on defensive behaviour that inevitably leads to the closing of inter-departmental boundaries. When the stake-holders find their needs being neglected and the system itself inaccessible to them, they began to rely in their political representations not only to voice their needs, but also to intercede on their behalf. The absence of communication between the system and the stake-holders can be seen as primarily responsible for strengthening the political system as a grievance handling function, the political worker, dependent as he is on the stake holders for his very survival, is much more responsible to their needs.

If the absence of appropriate relationships amongst the departments at the district level leads to a loss of autonomy vis-a-vis the political system, there is also a loss of discretion and the authority vis-a-vis the larger administrative system of which the district is a part.

According to the Report of the Committee to review the existing Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes (CAARD), the following deficiencies and gaps are noticeable at the District Level⁷².

- i) There are no coordination mechanisms at the District level whereby the District Rural Development Agency can actually discharge the role suggested by the nomenclature and probably by the originators of the concept. Its role is presently more or less confined to channelising finance for one, and in some cases, two programmes. At the same time, the impact of these programmes, particularly the IRDP, has been relatively limited because of the absence of infrastructural support which was expected to be provided through the sectoral programmes, an expectation which has been almost totally belied.
- ii) Even for the specific programmes being dealt with by the DRDA, the provision of one APO each in certain disciplines hardly equips it with the wherewithal for planning, profit formulation and implementation in their respective sectors.
- iii) There is perceptible deficiency on the monitoring side and even the posts sanctioned have not been filled up in many places.
- iv) There is no expertise on the side of area development planning comprehensive watershed planning and technology dissemination which would be the distinctive feature for special Area Development Programme.
- v) The engineering side continues to be woefully weak in terms of the need to have a shelf of projects on conformity with approved techno-economic norms and adequate field supervision.
- vi) There is virtually no arrangement for identification and registration of those who require employment and monitoring of the actual employment provided.
- vii) The other important institutions that could provide staff and line support to the DRDA in functions directly related to rural development programmes viz., the DIC, the DMPEGC etc, continue to function under their own separate departments and have at best marginal coordination with DRDAs.

In India, the Five Year Plan have been dominated by a sectoral approach to planning. The concept of spatial development, involving as it does crucial locational choices, has so far played a negligible part in our planning exercises. This neglect of spatial

planning has persisted inspite of the emergence of increasing regional imbalances - both inter state and intra-state, and their recognition by the planners and the government. Secondly, the plans, have, in theory insisted on the need to decentralize ,the process of planning and have, as a corollary to this, also emphasized the need for grass-roots approach to planning and public participation in the formulation and implementation of plans. The Administrative Reforms Commission, particularly the study team on machinery for planning, made out a strong case for decentralizing the process of planning.

In spite of all these, our practical record in decentralization and multi-level planning is far from impressive. It is noteworthy that even decentralisation of the first order, namely central to State Planning, has not taken place in all the states at the same level of efficiency.

The fundamental weakness of District Planning may be decided as philosophic. The rationale behind it has not been appreciated. Moreover, district planning can not be extended to be anything more than a routine follow-up of state plans, unless decentralization of the first order has worked well. District Planning can not succeed unless the tone for multi-level planning is set at State level. The basic weakness of the district plan and that there is no technical cell at he district level which specialises in area development and planning.

Secondly, District Planning is still treated as miniature state or national planning. It is rarely that it is essentially or spatial planning is to introduce a spatial dimension in our planning processes at all levels. As against the present method of preparing sectoral plans and then trying to distribute the activities in different regions and sub-regions, a district plan should be an integrated spatial plan to begin with and for implementation purposes each sectors should than be assigned the role it has to play. In other words, the whole approach has to be reversed and sectoral development schemes should emanate from integrated spatial development plans:

The main reason for the growing regional imbalances in the country is the lack of clarity in matters of goals and objectives of planned development, our national policies pertaining to redistribution of income, wealth and means of production have been known for deliberate ambiguity. The states have to depend too heavily on the central allocation of resources, leaving only a limited scope for initiative and innovation.

The Problems in planning at the district level are far more serious. Districts do not have their own funds; their main source of income is the State. The State level sectoral departments have control over the personal working at the district and lower levels. As a consequence district planning turns out to be nothing but a collection of demands that each sector can place on the state exchequer. Being close to the people, the district planning must be space and target group specific.

These all should not lead one to conclude that the whole situation is hopeless and nothing can be done. The weaknesses are highlighted mainly because we can not improve unless we know the weakness. District administration will have to overcome these deficiencies before it is able to play its proper role in meeting new challenges and performing new tasks. To cope up with the increasing burden of work, new districts have been created in many states by breaking up large and unwieldy districts⁷³. But this has been an adhoc process. District administration today is in a state of disarray and if it remains weak, Indian administration would be like a house built upon sand.

Indian planning is now reaching the stage of maturity. Much has been achieved in the past, but there is lot more to be done. Each Five Year Plan has generated new thinking and opened new vistas for planned development. From the high pitched centralized planning of 1950, we have now come down to block level planning. India is now in search of an indgeneous model of development - a model which must emerge from its own experience of the last forty years and which must take note of exceptional circumstances in which the country is placed today.

To quote from the Sixth Plan documents : In the district level planning process, it is necessary to involve the elected institutions for development in the district, the financial institutions, and public representative with a sufficient understanding of the socio-economic milieu, so that the plans may be practical and suited to local conditions. The district plan will have to be both resource development as well as an infrastructure plan for supporting the production-cum-employment thrust of the block level-planning. The district plan will also take into consideration the institutional support available, input services, and the marketing facilities that have to be developed.

The challenge is there, and the opportunity, for district administration as a whole, to exercise the much needed initiative and capability.

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