

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

District administration, which has been looked upon as the cutting edge of public administration, the traditional operational unit of the Indian administration and the level where practically policy ends, actions begin, has significantly changed in character in consequence of the attempt on the part of the governments to improve the standards of living in the rural areas through development programmes. This emphasis on development programmes has broadened the horizon of district administrative activities. The district administrative system is now expected to be characterized by the philosophy of development — the philosophy is now a universal phenomena throughout the whole world — by the imaginative and innovating ethos, by multipurpose and multiprocessed programmes.

In addition to the emphasis on development programmes, a key factor that seems important in having changed the nature and character of the district administrative system is the philosophy of democracy. District administration which was so neatly built by the British has now to function in a new environment surrounded by democratic parameters. District administration which was a cog in the administrative machine to further the Imperialist interests has now to operate to bolster the interests of the people.

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Moreover, the introduction of Panchayati Raj institutions at the district, block and village levels is responsible for significant changes in the district administrative system. These institutions charged with development activities are taking away much of the prestige of the traditional district administration. This has especially been the situation in West Bengal since the introduction of the new Panchayati Raj system in 1978.

The cumulative effect of the philosophies of development, democracy and decentralisation on district administration is that it is throbbing with new enthusiasm and vitality, new programmes and activities, new organisational structures and new outlook and motivations following from the new objectives and changed perspectives.

With this backdrop in view, the primary purpose of the study is to analyse structure, functions and some behavioural dimensions of district administration in two selected North Bengal districts in its changing perspectives. To what extent has the structure of district administration undergone changes in its pattern rigorously built by the Britishers? Additional of institutions in the periphery of traditional district administration i.e., setting-up of Panchayati Raj institutions, creation of new levels in the administrative hierarchy i.e., the establishment of Blocks

as units of administration establishment of projects with controls resting outside the traditional district administration i.e. Small Farmers' Development Agency, Intensive Cattle Development Projects, Comprehensive Area Development Projects, etc., differentiation of functions with separate hierarchy in the same department, i.e., creation of the Office of the District Agriculture, the Office of the District Agricultural Marketing, the Office of the Soil Conservation at the district level etc., all belonging to the Agricultural Department, etc., are definitely indicators of changing pattern in the structure of district administration. Historical matters are also included in order to show changes in the concept of the district.

To what extent have the purposes and principles, in other words, the functions of district administration undergone changes? How the functional changes are to be measured? Documentary evidences from the Five Year Plans, vital statistics collected from different departments functioning at the two selected districts — Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri of North Bengal and budgetary data over time are presented to show changes in the functional content of district administration.

Moreover, the changing perspectives and emphasis on changed objectives require administrators of different

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styles and others. Administrators at this crucial level are expected to shake off the colonial attitudes, namely, routine-mindedness, lack of purpose and of imagination. They must be self-reliant and self-confident. They must be flexible human and personal. They must be responsive to the demands of democracy. They must believe people, should not adhere to the principles of bureaucracy strictly and thus, possess dynamic neutrality which indicates that decisions should be sensitive and responsive to human needs and situations. The study intends to answer the question : how far the administrators at the district level have acquired the development attitudes in terms of democracy, bureaucracy, trust and neutrality?

The study is divided into ten chapters and nine appendices. Chapter One deals with the theoretical considerations including a discussion on "change" and "development". This chapter introduces the questions to be answered by the researcher and also critically discusses the available literature on district administration. Chapter Two covers the methods used to answer the questions raised in the previous chapter. Basically, the study is based on the survey method which includes the questionnaire and interview techniques as well as three case studies. It is very difficult to understand the crucial significance of district administration without

an historical perspective. After all, a part of every research is definitely post hoc facto research. This necessity is fulfilled in Chapter Three. Chapter Four discusses the purposes, principles and structure of district administration. It focuses on the changing patterns of these purposes, principles and structure due to the policy-shifts on the part of the government. This chapter makes a detailed discussion of the new Panchayati Raj administration in West Bengal and summary description of three case studies (i.e. Distribution of Short Term Loans, Minikit Distribution and Selection of Sites for R.S.I. Schemes) to clarify the interactions of two wings of administration of the districts and their consequent impact on the structure, through empirical data. This chapter also focuses on changes in the functional content of district administration measured through budgetary data over time. Though the Deputy Commissioner is a part and parcel of the structure of district administration, his role is so unique and pivotal in the whole gamut of district administration that a separate chapter is needed to show the changing role of the Deputy Commissioner. The role of the Deputy Commissioner is analysed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Six deals with the administrators and their job-satisfactions. As development activities changed the nature of both the job and responsibilities of the administrators, it is of importance to know to what extent the

the administrators are satisfied with their job and the factors which they consider important for job-satisfactions. Chapter Seven is concerned with Administrators' Norms and Roles. As the administrative system is characterised by a set of institutional norms, it is interesting to examine the normative standards that guide the behaviour of administrators and the role they define or set for themselves. Chapter Eight deals with the relations between administrators and political leaders. It is necessary to examine the interactions between administrators and political leaders because this throws considerable light on the administrators' behaviour at the district level. Chapter Nine discusses the attitudes of administrators towards certain modernising values as well as towards certain inherent tendencies of organisation. Chapter Ten presents the summary of findings conclusions and offers a few suggestions. By way of a cursory summing up, it may be stated that the pattern of district administration devised by the British and inherited by the Indians, has undergone definite changes.

It may appear that the analysis is based heavily on perceptual data acquired through the techniques of questionnaire and interviews. This is necessary, because the purpose of the study, as stated in Chapter Two, is not only the structure and functions of district administration, but

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also the evaluations and perceptions of the administrators at the district level. Moreover, the organization is a human problem; knowledge of administration means knowledge of people in administration: what they think of themselves, how they see the administrative world and their place in it, what in administrative life is important to him. Administrators' needs, administrators' values, administrators' beliefs - this is the stuff of administration. However, perceptual data are supplemented summarily by three case studies, statistical data gathered from District Gazetteers, District Census Hand-books, District Credit Plans etc.

The study also includes several Appendices. Appendices one and two deal with the Survey Form as administered to the administrators and politicians respectively. Appendix Three provides the portrait of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri Districts at a glance in comparison to the other parts of West Bengal as a whole. Appendix Four portrays Programme Devolution to Panchayat Institutions upto 1961. Appendices Five and Six state the allotment and expenditure of Cash and Food grants upto 30.2.61. Appendix Seven presents the Government Order No. 43-3A(AE) for the Reorientation of Administration in Divisions, Districts and Development Blocks. Appendices Eight and Nine deal with the allocation of Credit (Block-wise) upto 1962 for the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri.

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respectively. Maps of the districts of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling are also inserted at the beginning of the dissertation.

An earnest attempt is made to keep the local flavour of the study intact through the infusion of socio-economic, administrative and other data regarding the two-collected districts of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling throughout the study, especially in Chapter Two, Chapter Four, Chapter Ten and Appendices. Comparative analysis is avoided, because the administrators apprehended that they would be identified in that case, though there was enough scope for making comparisons.

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