

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AT THE CENTRAL, STATE AND DISTRICT LEVELS

20.1 INTRODUCTION

Administration in India is carried on at several levels: central level, state level, and district and local level. This lesson deals with (a) the structure of Central Administration (b) the structure of State Administration, and (c) the structure of District Administration including sub-divisional and Block Administration. Also, in this lesson the role of bureaucracy in development administration has been explained. At the central level, the Union Government looks after the national affairs such as defence, foreign affairs, railways, communication, currency and coinage and guides national development activities in such fields as education, health, agriculture, industries and so on. At the next level, there are states like Maharashtra, Punjab, Assam, Uttar Pradesh. Administration at the state level is concerned with economic and social activities in the interest of the welfare and development of the people living in the states. It deals with such important subjects as law and order, justice, and jails and others. State administration is performed from state headquarters and the field level. District administration is an important unit of state administration at the field level. At the local level, which is closest to the people, there are local government in urban and rural areas. Local government — municipal government in urban areas and panchayati raj in rural areas has been discussed separately. You have also read in details about structure and functions of various organs of Union and State Governments. In this lesson you will read about administration at various levels.

20.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to :

- identify the structure of central administration,
- recall the structure of state administration
- explain the structure of district administration.
- recall the functions of three levels of administration

- describe the administration and roles of the major functionaries at the central level, at the state level, and in the districts;
- explain the meaning of bureaucracy.
- evaluate the role of bureaucracy in development.

20.3 ADMINISTRATION AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL

Two important features of Indian Government and administration, under the Constitution of India, are :

- (a) Federalism, or constitutionally divided powers between the centre (Union) and the states; and
- (b) Parliamentary democracy both at the centre and in the states, under which the executive is accountable to the legislature.

The organisation of central administration is very vast, consisting of the secretariat, the departments and ministries, their executive agencies and other important constitutional bodies like Election Commission, Finance Commission etc.

1. The President as Executive Head

At the head of central administration is the President of India in whose name the whole machinery works. The President of India is the head of state. Supreme executive power of the Union is vested in him. You have read in lesson no 10 that the Union Government is carried on in his name. He is elected for a period of five years by (i) the elected members of both Houses of Parliament, and (ii) the elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of the States. As head of state, he is vested with wide constitutional powers. He is the Supreme Commander of the armed forces of the country. He sends and receives ambassadors and other diplomatic representatives. In the judicial field, he can grant pardons, reprieves or remissions of punishments of convicts. Although, he is not a member of Parliament, he summons and prorogues Parliament; he can dissolve the Lok Sabha (the Lower House). The Constitution empowers the President to proclaim "Emergencies" under very special circumstances such as war, constitutional breakdown in states etc. The consequences of such emergency proclamations are such that enormous administrative powers are concentrated in the hands of the central government and the states temporarily lose their autonomy.

Powers of the President might be giving an impression that the President of India is the real ruler of the country. But, you will recall that the parliamentary system of democracy means that the real powers are vested in elected Parliament. It is the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as the head that forms the real executive and exercises the powers, nominally vested in the President. So, in brief, the President of India is the head of State, and the Prime Minister who leads the Council of Ministers is head of the Government. The President appoints the Prime Minister who in practice is leader of the majority party. The ministers who are members of the Council of Minister are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. Constitutionally, the council of ministers is to aid and advise the President. The Prime Minister has to keep the President informed of all decisions of the Cabinet, and he has to supply all information as the President might call for. The relationship between the President and the Prime Minister is a matter of great understanding, maturity of dealings and mutual self-respect. Constitutionally, the President is bound to accept the Prime Minister's advice. But, in reality, the two functionaries have generally been conducting their relationships smoothly more on the basis of mature understanding and mutual trust and respect than reliance on constitutional power.

2. The Prime Minister

You have read in lesson no. 11 that the central government is, in a way, a prime ministerial government. In normal times, when his party has a comfortable majority in Parliament and the Prime Minister has dynamic leadership qualities, the country is virtually run by the Prime Minister. His position has been described in such phrases as "keystone of the cabinet arch", "a moon among lesser stars", or the sun around which in revolves the planets. Portfolios of different ministers are allotted by the Prime Minister. He is Chairman of the cabinet and presides over its meetings. All government activities are co-ordinated through him and his office. His advice is sought by all his cabinet colleagues in running their departments.

The Prime Minister is leader of the Lok Sabha. He leads major policy discussions and intervenes in critical and controversial issues. He has to keep the opposition in good humour. In maintaining order and discipline in the House, the Speaker relies heavily on the Prime Minister. As a senior officer of Lok Sabha has said: "The P.M. exercises direct influence on the course of business. The whole policy of the government and measures dealing with the course of its business is concentrated in his person".

The Prime Minister is the chief spokesman of government on all domestic and foreign policy matters. In dealing with the international agencies and forums such as the United Nation, the World Bank etc. the Prime Minister takes the leading role. Other ministers play their roles in the international arena with support and advice from the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister keeps in close touch with the President. He is President's chief advisor. He keeps the President informed about major policies and activities of the government. He serves as a channel of communication between the President and the Council of Ministers.

In a parliamentary democracy, the Prime Minister has to play a number of roles — inside Parliament, outside Parliament in relation to his political followers and Cabinet colleagues, in the management of government machinery, in cultivating relationships with other parties and organisations who matter in the country's administration and development. He is, above all, the leader of the nation. Clearly, it is the Prime Minister who projects the country's image abroad, and it is through his dynamism and moral and administrative leadership that the country strives for both moral and material property. The opposite is equally true. Without much political strength and necessary dynamism and moral sense, the Prime Minister may not be able to lead the nation's destiny and may even put the nation in peril. Ultimately, therefore, the greatness of the nation depends, to a large extent, on the greatness of the Prime Minister. You have read, in details, about his position in lesson No. 11.

3. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO)

In this lesson you will, for the first time read about the Prime Minister's office. Because of the many sided involvement of the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Secretariat came into being in 1964 when Lal Bahadur Shastri became the Prime Minister. The Secretariat has been assisting the Prime Minister in his public activities and functions as head of the government. After Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri took over as PM, and during his tenure the Secretariat was established. It emerged as a regular department with a secretary as its head. It took a prominent role in shaping and influencing major policy decisions of the government. When Smt. Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister, the PM's Secretary came to acquire more and more powers and soon assumed even more power than the Cabinet and became the real centre of all authority and decision making in government. During the last ill-fated "Emergency, the PM's Secretariat became the government, cutting down the importance of most other government departments and

agencies. When the Janata Government took over in 1977, the Prime Minister's Secretariat was reduced in size, and its powers and authority were considerably cut down and decentralised. In 1977, the name of Prime Minister's Secretariat was changed and it came to be known as the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). As a modest and slim organisation, its task was restricted to advising and assisting the Prime Minister in his public activities.

The PMO started expanding again when Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister in 1984. Many advisors were appointed and other staff engaged to help and advise the new Prime Minister in his manifold activities. Gradually, the PMO emerged as a very powerful centre of authority and influence, and importance of regular ministries of the government was correspondingly going down. Since then, the PMO has continued to grow in importance. It has been argued in its defence that the Prime Minister needs technical advice on many things in today's complex world of administration. Also, certain departments like Atomic Energy and Electronics and External Affairs have usually been under the direct care of the Prime Minister. So, the PMO's existence and modest expansion stand to reason. The PMO, however, should not grow at the expense of the other arms of government — the Cabinet Secretariat and the Ministries. Also, it is quality of advice that counts and not the quantity of staff engaged by the PMO. How the Prime Minister looks at his own organisation and what kind of advice he needs will be the chief determining factors of PMO's existence and modest expansion stand to reason. The PMO includes several senior officers. They scrutinise all the files sent by various departments for the Prime Minister's consideration. The PMO recommends action on these files, which the Prime Minister normally approach..

4. The Cabinet Secretariat

The cabinet functions through a number of committees. These committees examine particular problems in depth and help in co-ordination among departments and policy formulation and implementation. Important among these committee are Economic Affairs Committee, Political Affairs Committee, Appointments Committee etc.

It is against this background that one has to appreciate the role of the Cabinet Secretariat. The efficient working of the cabinet depends on the Cabinet-Secretariat. It proposes the agenda of Cabinet meetings and supplies necessary information and data for Cabinet deliberations. Records of deliberation and decisions of the Cabinet and its committees are drawn up by the Secretariat. The main functions of Cabinet Secretariat are to prepare Cabinet agenda and minutes of discussions, maintain relevant records and keep track of implementation of cabinet decisions by different ministries. There is a Committee of Secretaries which meets periodically under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary. This Committee considers problems requiring inter-ministerial consultations. It is a major function of the Cabinet Secretariat to support the cabinet committees. The Cabinet Secretariat gives secretariat assistance to the Cabinet Committees. It finalises the rules of business of the government under the direction of the Prime Minister and with the President's approval.

The Cabinet Secretariat is headed by the Cabinet Secretary. He is always a senior I.A.S.officer with ripe administrative experience. He ranks the highest amongst the Central Government Officers, and the efficiency of the Cabinet Secretariat owes a lot to-the managerial capability of the Cabinet Secretary.

5. Secretariat Organisation

The office that coordinates the work of various ministries and departments listed in the "Allocation of Business Rules" is collectively known as the Secretariat. As a complex of

offices, the Secretariat assists the government in the fulfilment of its responsibilities. It is the nerve centre of the government. It serves as a nucleus for the total machinery of a ministry. As an institution, the Secretariat is indispensable for the proper functioning of government.

The crucial role of the Secretariat can be readily understood from its core activities which are as under :

- (i) The Secretariat assists the ministers in the formulation of government policies in different areas such as health, agriculture, education, defence and so on. For this purpose, the Secretariat has to provide adequate data and information in support of policy making function.
- (ii) It helps the ministers in their legislative work. Draft legislation is prepared for placement in the legislature with the active assistance of the Cabinet Secretariat. In order to enable the minister to meet the queries — the parliamentary questions — the secretariat collects relevant information and prepares explanatory notes.
- (iii) The Secretariat is conversant with past practices and precedents. As the storehouse of administrative memory, it helps the minister to relate the present practices to past experience. In this way, consistency and continuity is maintained in the management of ministries and departments.
- (iv) Any issue demanding government action is examined by the Secretariat in its totality and interconnectedness with legal-constitutional provisions and financial implications.
- (v) As a channel of communication between the states and with the planning Commission and the Finance Commission, the Secretariat performs important liaison work, and holds general balance in government.
- (vi) Many ministries have field offices (such as Post and Telegraphs which is part of the Ministry of Communications, and Central Public Work Department etc.) The Secretariat keeps track of the activities of fields offices and guides and directs them to ensure efficient operations.

A ministry usually has one or more allied departments. Each department is headed by a secretary who usually belongs to the Indian Administrative Service. The Secretary is the chief advisor of the minister who is the political head of the ministry. There are additional secretaries, joint secretaries, deputy secretaries, directors and under secretaries etc. among whom the work of the department is distributed. All of them are concerned with one or more sections or departments within a ministry.

6. Attached Offices

The Secretariat is meant for top policy-making. Execution of policies has been entrusted to a number of executive agencies. Two main forms of such agencies are :

- (a) attached offices, and
- (b) subordinate offices.

Attached offices are those on whom the ministry depends for technical support. These offices are closely associated with the ministries or the departments. The Ministry of Finance has quite a few attached offices such as the Directorate of Inspection (Income tax), the Directorate of Training (Custom, Central Excise) etc. Intelligence Bureau, for instance, is an attached office of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Most ministries have their attached offices.

The subordinate offices function as field agencies of the government. They normally operate under an Attached Office. The Sardar Patel National Police Academy at Hyderabad is an instance of a subordinate office under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.1

1. In India's parliamentary democracy, who is head of the real executive at the Centre?

2. When was the Prime Minister's Secretariat established, and by whom?

3. Who is the head of the Cabinet Secretariat? _____
4. Name one attached office of the Ministry of Home Affairs. _____
5. What is the status of Sardar Patel National Police Academy at Hyderabad? _____
6. Who is responsible for the preparation of the agenda of meetings of Union Cabinet?

20.4 STRUCTURE OF STATE ADMINISTRATION

In our Constitution, powers have been divided between the Union Government and the State Governments in different parts of the country. Like the central administration, state administration is also organised on the principle of parliamentary democracy.

1. The Governor

The Governor of a State is the head of state administration, and as you have read in lesson 10, the entire state machinery operates in his name. However, Governor is a constitutional ruler; real power vests in the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers. The President of India appoints the Governor for a period of five years. There can be a Governor appointed for two or more states, although normally one Governor for one state is the rule.

The powers of the Governor are quite extensive. Basically, the Governor acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers. There are, however, some powers in the exercise of which the Governor can act independently and need not consult the Council of Ministers. These are called the "discretionary powers" of the Governor.

In the legislative field, Governor's powers extend to summoning, and proroguing the Legislature and dissolving the Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha). At the commencement of the first session each year, the Governor addresses the Legislature. The bills passed by the Legislature are sent to him for his consent. He issues ordinances when the Legislature is not in session. He can send messages to the Legislature. These and similar other powers indicate that the Governor, who is not a member of the State Legislature, has close links with it.

As already stated, the state administration is carried on in the name of the Governor. He appoints the Chief Minister, and on his advice, other members of the Council of Ministers are appointed by him. Normally, the leader of the majority party is invited to form a government. But, there have been many occasions when, after an election, the composition of the legislature has been such that no single party could command a majority. In this kind of political fluidity and uncertainty the Governor has to be extremely tactful to ascertain who can form and run the governments. Because of defections (members leaving one party

and joining another), a government in power may be losing its majority in the legislature and there might be a need for forming a new ministry. At the state level, such situations have not been infrequent. Here the Governor has to be watchful and a good political judge to save the state administration from possible disorder and administrative uncertainty.

Some other basic powers of the Governor include framing of rules for the transaction of business of government including allocation of portfolios among ministers, keeping track of state administration through regular interactions with the chief minister. It is the duty of the Chief Minister to keep the Governor informed about the goings on in the administration. The Advocate General of the State, and the Public Service Commission are appointed by the Governor. In respect of the State Universities, the Governor has a special role to play as Chancellor of the University.

In respect of the state judiciary, the Governor decides matters relating to appointment, posting and promotion of district judges and other judicial officers. He is consulted by the President in the appointment of judges of the High Court. He has powers to grant pardon convicted by the courts, to remit or commute their sentence.

The State Governor has, in some instances, been empowered to use his own discretion without consulting the council of ministers. The Governor of Assam possesses discretionary power in respect of the administration of tribal areas of the state. The Governor of Nagaland has similar discretionary powers to combat violence and insurgency.

In normal times, the Governor may not give his assent to a bill passed by the Legislature and reserve it for the consideration of the President of India. When a state government is, in the opinion of the Governor, not functioning in accordance with the constitution, Governor prepares his own report on state administration for submission to the President, and may recommend imposition of the President's Rule in the State.

The Governor of a State today has to function with great care, caution, and capability. There are many regional demands that come to him for solution. Political parties are too many to be accommodated and given due attention. There are certain expectations from the Centre and pressures from within the state politics and administration. The Governor has to keep his cool and prove that he is not a mere agent of the centre; the interests of the state are foremost in his mind.

2. The Chief Minister

At the state level, the Chief Minister is the real executive head of State government. He is appointed by the Governor. Other members of the Council of ministers are appointed by the Governor on his advice. With a comfortable majority in the legislature and with party backing, the Chief Minister is everywhere the real ruler of a state. He creates his own cabinet, and the members of his team are dependent on his patronage and support. The portfolios are distributed among his Cabinet colleagues by the Chief Minister who is the chairman of the state cabinet. The policies and workings of the different ministries are co-ordinated by him. The ministers look to the Chief Minister as the sole arbitrator in cases of disputes between various departments, and they seek his help and advice in the running of their departments.

Between the Governor and the Council of Ministers, the Chief Minister acts as the principal communicating channel. On his part, the Chief Minister keeps the Governor informed about major issues and problems relating to state administration.

The Chief Minister is the leader of the Legislature and guide in the administrative matters. He leads his own party and manages politics to ensure electoral victory and maintain contacts with people. In today's political situation in most states, the Chief Minister has

to function with equal competence on two fronts; the political front and the administrative front.

3. The Chief Secretary

As in central administration, each state has a Secretariat. The Secretariat occupies the pivotal position in state administration. The Secretariat, as headquarters of state administration, consists of different departments — each headed by a secretary. Below the secretary, there are other offices manning different positions in the hierarchy. On the administrative side, the Chief Secretary is the chief among secretaries and is the linchpin of the secretariat. He is head of the civil service in the state, and as such deals with transfers and postings of government personnel. All government servants look to him for their condition of service and work. Just as the Chief Minister provides leadership on the political side, the Chief Secretary provides leadership on the administrative side. He is at the apex of the official machinery, and the Chief advisor to the council of ministers.

More particularly, the Chief Secretary is the principal advisor to the Chief Minister. As Secretary to the Cabinet, he is responsible for preparing agenda for meetings general supervision and control over the entire secretariat.

The Chief Secretary is in overall control over the central record branch, and is responsible for maintenance of the secretariat including rooms allocation and watch and ward. Inter-departmental co-ordination is achieved through him and he assists the chief minister to put the different parts of the administration together. He presides over several meetings of the secretaries who look to him for advice and guidance. During emergencies such as floods, drought etc. the chief secretary assumes the role of the chief of emergency administration. Acknowledging his crucial role in state administrative set up, it has been said that the Chief Secretary is the keystone of the administrative arch.

4. The State Secretariat

It has been explained earlier that the secretariat forms the headquarters of government. This consists of a complex of state departments. Each Government department is headed by a Secretary who is usually, an IAS officer. Important secretariat departments are Home, Finance, Public Works, Health, Family Welfare, Education, Irrigation and Water Resources etc. Below the Secretary, there are other officers such as Joint Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and so on. The Secretariat, you should remember, is chiefly the policy — making organ of government. The Secretary to a department, with the help of his subordinates, helps the minister in framing policies in specific administrative areas (e.g. Public Work, Health, Education etc.). Each department keeps records of administrative data and information in a relevant field. Also, how policies are actually being executed is an important concern of the Secretariat. Virtually, the Secretariat constitutes the brain-power and “administrative memory” of the government. Besides, the Secretariat is in charge of government establishments including account of rooms and stationeries. To manage office space and domestic housekeeping and framing the departmental budget are the key jobs of the Secretariat. All proposed legislation’s are drafted in the Secretariat with the active role of the Law Minister, and all legislative queries are dealt with by it.

5. The Directorate

It is generally understood that the Secretariat is the policy-making organisation, whereas the Directorate is the executive agency. A Directorate attached to a department is headed by a Director. For instance, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Urban Development is the policy making organ with a minister as its political head and an I.A.S. Secretary as

its administrative head. The Directorate of Municipal Administration headed by the Director and supported by Joint/Deputy Directors keeps track of field level problems of the municipalities. The Directorate is in constant touch with what is happening in the municipalities, and the stock of information at the Directorate level becomes very useful for the Secretariat department to frame new policies such as grants-in-aid formula or drawing up a new legislation, or making amendments to existing laws. Similarly the Education Department which is concerned with framing of policies and legislation's in the educational field is having a number of Directorates under it. The Director of Public Instruction is a well-known institution which looks after education in the state.

The Secretariat and the Directorate are separate institutions, but both function in close collaboration with each other. And in actual administration, often the line between the two is not rigidly drawn.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.2

Fill in the blanks :

1. The Governor can issue the ordinances when the _____ is not in sessions.
2. The President consults Governors in matters of appointment of _____.
3. _____ is head of the civil service in a state.
4. Deputy Secretaries rank below the level of _____.
5. The field level problems of the municipalities are looked after by the Directorate of _____.
6. The Director of Public Instruction looks after _____ in a state.

20.5 STRUCTURE OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Each state is divided into a number of administrative units. These are called district. District administration is decentralised state administration. The purpose of district administration is basically to bring the regulatory and service functions of the state nearer to people. So, most of the state departments such as Public Works, Irrigation, Health, Education etc. are having their offices in the district. District as the field unit of administration, in its present form, is a mixed creation of Mughal and British regimes. The needs of colonial rule during the days of the East India Company shaped the basic form of district administration, that lingers on even today. The head of district administration came to be called the district collector. He was concerned mainly with maintenance of public order, revenue collection, and land management, specially maintenance of land records. Historically, in the course of constitutional development during British rule, the collector's position changed. For instance, with the introduction of local self-government, municipal and local functions were left to the care of locally elected bodies. Also, many new departments were set up with their offices at the district level. These departments had direct links with their district level units. The collector had generally been regarded as the head of district administration; but a tendency developed slowly to bypass the collector and take direct orders from the government departments at the state level. All these changes weakened the position of the collector. He continued to be treated as the "eye and ears" of the government, and yet, he found it difficult to move the entire machinery of district administration in concert.

After Independence, government had to take up the work of speedy socio-economic development. A basic change in the outlook of district administration took place. Rather responsible it was made not only for law and order, but also for people's welfare and

numerous development activities. Agricultural and industrial production had to be increased; poverty, malnutrition, ill-health had to be tackled on war footing. Infrastructural development like roads — construction, electricity generation, irrigation expansion, opening of new railway lines — all these had to be done as quickly as possible. These new activities meant opening of new offices at the district level and below. The District Collector, being a generalist administrator, had to co-ordinate all these development activities.

1. District Collector

The role of the district collector has to be seen in the context of evolution of district administration. Even now, he represents the 'government' to the common citizen. His earlier law-and-order maintenance role remains. This role he plays with the help of the district police organisation headed by the Superintendent of Police. But his major attention now is focused on keeping up the supply line in respect of essential commodities (e.g. kerosene, and other rationed supply etc.), ensuring smooth implementation of development projects in different sectors like agriculture, poverty alleviation, child health and so on, and facilitating the work of other departments (e.g. land acquisition for road construction or irrigation dams).

The collector's primary role is supervision, integration and co-ordination. The different departments carry on their activities independently of any interaction with sister departments. It is through the intervention of the collectors that a degree of co-ordination is achieved among the departments. Also, there is the local government sector. The panchayati raj bodies in rural areas and municipalities and municipal corporations in urban centres provide civic facilities and implement development schemes. The functions of these local bodies are integrated with those of the district level departments under the leadership of the collector.

The collector listens to people's grievances and tries to redress these. Many local demands of the people for a new road, passenger transport, water supply etc. are made before the collector, who, in turn, draws the attention of the state government to the solution of these problems.

The state government depends on the collector for maintenance of public order and successful implementation of projects and policies. There are regular feed backs from the district collector to the state headquarters. These help the state administration to feel the pulse of public life in the districts. The collector today has thus to play multiple roles; peace-keeping, development administration, public grievances redressal, co-ordinating government activities, and a vital communication link with the state headquarters. During emergencies like flood, earthquake, drought etc., the collector assumes the role of the commander of district machinery; and in fact, entire district administration comes directly under his control as the chief representative of state administration in the field.

2. The Sub-divisional Officer (SDO)

The districts are usually subdivided into smaller units called 'Sub-Divisions'. The officer in charge of a sub-division is commonly known as the SDO. He functions almost like the collector, as the chief co-ordinator of government activities in the subdivision. The SDO is an integral part of district administration. He assists the collector and is in constant touch with his boss. He supervises police activities, keeps the maps and land records, and generally help in the assessment and collection of land revenue. At his level, land-related cases come to him. Regulatory functions include recommendation of gun licences and other licences. He has to take care that development projects in the subdivision are successfully implemented. In general, he has to be in close touch with local people and keep the collector

informed about what goes on in his subdivision. At the sub-division level, he performs more or less the same kinds of activities what the 'collector' does at the district level. And he performs all these functions as an agent of the collector.

3. The Block Development Officer (BDO)

The 'Block' as a unit of government below the subdivision was created to bring 'development' nearer to people. It was created in 1952 along with the introduction of community development and national extension service. The Block Development Officer is the chief co-ordinator of development activities at the block level. He is a state government employee belonging to the state civil service cadre. On one side, therefore, he is an agent of the state and is in constant touch with his superior officers: the SDO and the Collector. He undertakes state functions like revenue work, rice procurement, election management, and general supervision of state activities at his level. At the other end, the BDO is integrally connected with the Panchayat Samiti — the middle tier of Panchyati Raj. You have read about the whole system of panchayati raj in lesson no. 25. He is secretary to panchayat samiti, and in this capacity he helps the samiti in holding meetings and keeping records, preparing the budget, formulating development proposals and implementing projects. There are a number of extension officers in different fields such as agriculture, co-operation, fisheries, animal husbandry etc. In their respective fields, they are the principal advisers and performers. The BDO is the captain of the extension team at the block level. The extension officers are, however, under dual control. For day-to-day administrative purposes, they function under the overall control of the BDO. But, for technical advice and control, they are under the jurisdiction of their respective district-level departments. This arrangement often creates conflicts and tensions and the BDO is not sure of getting the help of extension officers all the time. There is a tendency now to take these officers out of the control of BDO.

Two major activities of the BDO relate to:

- (a) development management; and (b) panchayat samiti management. In regard to development management, the BDO controls different projects and programmes in his block, monitors performance, and reports results to higher authorities — the Collector and the Zilla Parishad. The target specific of projects like tribal, SC/ST development work or beneficiary-oriented projects are implemented and monitored from the BDO's offices. There are several infrastructural schemes for irrigation, road work etc. which are also co-ordinated by the BDO to ensure timely completion.

As secretary to panchayat samiti, the BDO has to deal with the block level political leaders including the block chairman and other office bearers. Apart from house-keeping functions like budgeting etc., the BDO's activities often relate to solving political disputes and reconciliation of competing demands coming from different political interests. Cases of conflicts between the BDO and the local leaders are not uncommon, specially when the BDO opposes illegal expenditure and is unable to satisfy everybody. As the officer in charge of the panchayat samiti, his main job, however, is to see that the samiti level development activities are carried on properly and the accounts are kept in proper order.

20.6 ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN DEVELOPMENT

From our earlier discussion, it should be clear that after Independence Indian administration has changed from law-and-order orientation to 'development' orientation. Nation-building, socio-economic reconstruction and removal of social inequities are the main objectives of public administration in independent India. It is against this background that the role of 'bureaucracy' in development has to be discussed and appreciated.

1. Concept of Bureaucracy

German social philosopher, Max Weber, is the originator of the term 'bureaucracy'. To him, bureaucracy is a special type of organisation with a number of special features. (i) division of work (ii) regulation of work by formal rules (iii) hierarchy or vertical division of work and distribution of power, (iv) appointment on the basis of merit and service conditions of employees laid down by rules. A modern organisation, in Weber's view, needs these qualities to avoid personal and arbitrary rule and to clearly specify the jobs and working conditions. Impersonality, neutrality and objectivity are the qualities required of administrators functioning in a bureaucratic organisation. Bureaucracy is the term used for all the civil servants, who are experts and who are selected and appointed on the basis of merit, through competitive examinations. They hold office till the age of retirement. They do not change with the change of ministers.

2. Changing role of bureaucracy in India

As India, after independence, was involved in planned development of the country, questions were raised about the fitness of Indian bureaucracy for the performance of development activities. In India, the bureaucracy was the agent of the colonial rulers and entire administration was basically exploitative and status-quo oriented. The administrators were the masters, and people were not allowed to express their viewpoints. The historic purpose of Independence struggle was to make the voice of the people heard and to substitute people's rule for colonial, bureaucratic rule. One important opinion was thus to reject 'bureaucracy' as unfit for 'development'. The arguments were that the old colonial culture of 'domination' cannot be erased overnight. Administrators are not used to working with and for the people. They are unfamiliar with local people's problems and also unsympathetic to these. Democracy means people's rule. Politicians are better judges of the people and their problems. And the administrators do not wish to part with power. They look at the politicians as their competitor. Development means new kinds of activities. Production has to be increased in different sectors like agriculture, industry, fisheries and animal husbandry, forest etc. Administration, has to be more and more field oriented, and not secretariat oriented. Power and authority should therefore be decentralised. Bureaucracy, however, tends to centralise power and is generally reluctant to decentralise authority. The administrator should not be merely rule-oriented. The basic need is to bring about results with the help of time-bound programmes and projects. Local people's energy, skill and knowledge have to be utilised in local development work. Administrators, are not willing to work with people, and their jobs are transferable. Another argument has been that poverty, ill-health, social inequalities can be eradicated only with a missionary zeal. Bureaucracy normally does not have the necessary psychological qualities to work for social upliftment.

Despite such criticisms, it has been conceded that the administrators know how to run administration. Rules and regulations, discipline and merit are not to be belittled. Development does not mean illegal activities by breaking rules. Politicians are knowledgeable about local situations, but they are also prone to breaking rules and working for their narrow constituency interests. Politicians can work better when they are properly advised by the civil servants about rules and regulations, account-keeping and records maintenance. Politicians and administrators have to work together as a team. So, it is a matter of creating proper understanding about each other's role. Similarly the administrator has to be made 'development oriented'. They have to be trained to understand the politician's mind and requirements. Appropriate mental attitudes have to be inculcated among administrators to work with people and politicians in development situations. Politicians have to be similarly trained to understand the mind of the administrator and the formal requirements of administration.

It is in this process of changing work situations that development administration' emerged as a new branch of public administration. After more than four decades of development administration, the sharp differences between administrators and politicians have virtually disappeared. The administrator today is much more field-oriented and people centred. There are various branches of administration now that are constantly involved in 'development' activities. Bureaucracy in India is no longer the old colonial, people-avoiding type; nor is the politician today a quarrelsome, administrator-hater. People have become more articulate and administration-friendly. The real issue today is to make this people-politician-administrator partnership more durable and result oriented in order to bring about speedy development.

3. Evaluation of Bureaucracy in Development

As the above discussion has clarified, bureaucracy in India was suspect in earlier days because of its colonial past. It was suggested that 'development' needs people-friendly, action-oriented and result oriented administration. So, in the early fifties, bureaucracy's role in development was considered in negative terms.

As the development activities gathered momentum, many new departments had to be set up and new kinds of administrative personnel recruited. Target specific organizations were set up for tribal development, crop and animal husbandry development etc. Now, organisation created conditions for changing attitudes. Administrators were more science and technology oriented. The political demands from the top for more productivity and speedier amelioration of poverty situations and social justice started influencing the administrative mind. The new development situations started producing new administrators. There have been clashes and conflicts. Misunderstandings between politician and administrator have not been uncommon. But development created its own culture and bureaucracy had to change steadily to imbibe the new culture of people-orientation and 'development-mindedness'.

Training, work situation and collaborative activities have greatly changed the Indian bureaucracy. The problem, now, is not to dispense with it but how to make it more 'development' conscious and people-oriented. Development needs proper 'management'. Project formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are the basics of development administration. Also, financial management and accounting are equally necessary to guard against wastage and corruption. Values have to be inculcated to understand democratic culture in which people's voice needs to be heard and people have to be made active participants in development activities. From all accounts it appears that the bureaucracy in India has been slow in changing, but change has surely taken place. Change has also to take place in social capacity to manage 'development'. Over-reliance on bureaucracy tends to attach too much importance to this institution. Our local self-governing institutions need to be more and more empowered and community-based organisations need to be encouraged to take up local development. The role of bureaucracy in development is as much dependent on the government's attitude to bureaucracy as the steady growth of social capacity to take up local development independently.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.3

1. Who is head of the district administration?
2. After independence, besides law and order, what other activities are undertaken by district administration?
3. What does the State Government depend on the Collector for?

4. Who assists the collector in the assessment and collection of land revenue?
 5. Who is the Secretary of the Panchayat Samiti?
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WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In this lesson, you have learnt how public administration is organised and how it function at the Central, State and District level. At the Central level, the roles and working of the President of India, the Prime Ministry of India and his offices (called the PMO), the Cabinet Secretariat the Central Secretariat Organisation and its attached offices have been discussed.

Next, at the level of State Administration the roles of the State Governor the Chief Minister of the State, the Chief Secretary as the Chief Advisor to the Chief Minister and Cabinet and State Administration have been explained. In the state headquarter, the position and functioning of the State Secretariat and the Directorate have been discussed. At the field level, State Administration is run with the help of the district collector and other District level officers. The sub-divisional officers and the block development officer roles and responsibility have been classified in the lesson. The Administrators like the Secretary of a Department and the District level officer play an important role in development administration. How the bureaucracy plays its role in development, and what problem arise because of the involvement of bureaucracy in development work have been explained at the last part of this lesson.

After going through this lesson, you will, therefore, come to know how public administration is organised at different levels and what role the bureaucracy plays in development activities.

TERMINIAL EXERCISES

1. What are the function of the Prime Minister's Office?
2. Discuss the structure and working of the Cabinet Secretariat ?
3. Briefly describe the organisation of the Central Secretariat ?
4. Discuss the powers and function of the Sate Governor.
5. What is the role played by the Chief Secretary in State Administration ?
6. How is the State Secretariat organised ?
7. Discuss the role and functioning of the 'Directorate in State Administration.
8. Explain the importance of the District collector in District Administration.
9. What role does the following officers play in field administration ?
 - (a) The Sub-divisional Officers
 - (b) The Block Development Officer
10. What is meant by 'bureaucracy' ?
11. Explain the role and importance of bureaucracy in development administration.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

20.1

1. The Prime Minister.
2. 1964; Lal Bahadur Shastri
3. Cabinet Secretary
4. Intelligence Bureau
5. Subordinate office of Home Ministry
6. Cabinet Secretariat

20.2

1. Legislature
2. High Court Judges
3. The Chief Secretary
4. Joint Secretary
5. Municipal Administration
6. Education

20.3

1. Collector
2. People's welfare and development activities
3. Public order and successful implementation of policies and projects.
4. The Sub-Divisional Officer
5. B.D.O.

HINTS FOR TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Please refer to section 20.3.3
2. Please refer to section 20.3.4
3. Please refer to section 20.3.5
4. Please refer to section 20.4.1
5. Please refer to section 20.4.3
6. Please refer to section 20.4.4
7. Please refer to section 20.4.5
8. Please refer to section 20.5.1
9. Please refer to sections 20.5.2 and 20.5.3
10. Please refer to section 20.6.2
11. Please refer to section 20.6.3