A STUDY ON DISTRICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MADURAI DISTRICT

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Researcher
P. NAGARAJAN
(Reg.No.: 1711)

Supervisor
Dr. P. PERIAKARUPPAN, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
MADURAI KAMARAJ UNIVERSITY
MADURAI - 625 021
TAMIL NADU
INDIA

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SYNOPSIS

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INTRODUCTION

The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) has traditionally been the principal organ at the District level to oversee the implementation of different anti-poverty programmes. Since its inception, the administrative costs of the DRDAs were met by way of setting apart a share of the allocations for each programme.

However, of late, the number of the programmes had increased and while some of the programmes provided for administrative costs of the DRDAs, others did not. There was no uniformity among the different programmes to administrative costs. Keeping in view, the need for an effective agency at the district level to coordinate the anti-poverty effort, a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme for strengthening the DRDAs has been introduced with effect from 1st April, 1999. Accordingly, the administrative costs are fulfilled by providing a separate budget provisions. This scheme which is funded on a 75:25 basis between Centre and States, aims at strengthening and professionalising the DRDAs.

DISTRICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

If effective programme design is critical to successful implementation of rural development programmes, the same is delivery agency. None of the anti-
poverty programmes can have impact unless they are implemented with clarity of purpose and a commitment to the task. It is here that the DRDAs play a critical role. The DRDAs are not simply the implementation but also oversee the implementation of different programmes and ensure whether necessary linkages are provided. Thus DRDA is a supporting and facilitating organization plays a very effective role as a catalyst in development process.

The district Rural Development Agency is visualised as a professional agency, capable of managing the anti-poverty programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development on the one hand and to effectively relate these to the overall effort of poverty eradication in the District on the other. In other words, while the DRDA will continue to ensure effective utilization of the funds intended for anti-poverty programmes, it needs to develop a far greater understanding of the processes necessary for poverty eradication. It will also need to develop the capacity to build synergies among different agencies involved for the most effective results. It will therefore need to develop distinctive capabilities rather than perform tasks that are legitimately in the domain of the PRIs or the line departments. The role of the DRDA will therefore be prominent from all the other agencies, including the Zilla Parishad.

DRDAs must themselves be more professional and should be able to interact effectively with various other agencies. They are expected to coordinate
with the line department, the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the banks and other financial institutions, resources required for poverty reduction effort in the district. It shall be their endeavour and objective to secure inter-sectoral and inter-departmental coordination and cooperation for reducing poverty in the district. It is their ability to coordinate and bring about a convergence of approach among different agencies for poverty alleviation and would set them apart.

The DRDAs are expected to coordinate effectively with the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They are not supposed to perform any functions of PRIs.

The DRDAs will maintain their separate identity but will function under the chairmanship of the Chairman of Zilla Parishad. They are expected to be a facilitating and supporting organization to Zilla Parishad, providing necessary executive and technical support in respect of poverty reduction efforts. Wherever the Zilla Parishads are not in existence or are not functional, the DRDAs would function under the Collector/District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner, as the case may be.

The DRDAs are expected to oversee the implementation of different anti-poverty programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development in the district. This should not be confused with actual implementation, which will be by the Panchayati Raj and other Institutions. The DRDAs will monitor the implementation with the help of periodic reports as well as frequent field visits.
The purpose of the visit should be to facilitate the implementing agencies in improving implementation process, besides ensuring that the quality of implementation of programmes is high. This would include overseeing whether the intended beneficiaries are receiving the benefits under the different programmes.

It shall be the duty of the DRDAs to oversee and ensure that the benefits specifically earmarked for certain target groups (SC/ST, women and disabled) reach them. They shall take all necessary steps to achieve the prescribed norms.

The DRDAs shall take necessary step to improve the awareness regarding rural development and poverty alleviation, particularly among the rural poor. This would involve issues of poverty, the opportunities available to the rural poor and generally infusing a sense of confidence in their ability to overcome poverty. It would also involve sensitizing the different functionaries in the district to the different aspects of poverty and poverty alleviation programmes.

The DRDAs will strive to promote transparency in the implementation of different anti-poverty programmes. Towards the end, they shall publish the details of the different programmes and their implementation.

Viewing the substantial investment being made in poverty alleviation programmes, the DRDAs shall ensure financial discipline in respect of the funds
received by them, whether from Central or State Governments. They also ensure whether the accounts are properly maintained including the funds allocated to banks or implementing agencies in accordance with the guidelines of different programmes.

Thus the role of the DRDA is in terms of planning for effective implementation of anti-poverty programmes; coordinating with other agencies-Governmental, non-Governmental, technical and financial for successful programme implementation; enabling the community and the rural poor to participate in the decision marking process, overseeing the implementation to ensure adherence to guidelines, quality, equity and efficiency; reporting to the prescribed authorities on the implementation; and promoting transparency in decision making and implementation.

In addition the DRDAs shall coordinate and oversee the conduct of the BPL Census and such other surveys.

They also carry out / help in carrying out action research or evaluation studies that are initiated by the Central/State Governments.

The DRDAs should deal only with the anti-poverty programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. If DRDAs are to be entrusted with programmes of other ministries or those of the State Governments, it should be ensured that these have a definite antipoverty focus. Any programme to the DRDAs, other
than anti-poverty programmes of the Ministry, be it of any other Ministry of Government of India or the respective State Government will have to be done with the approval of the Secretary, Rural Development of the respective State(s), should examine such request in consultation with the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. In such cases, it must be ensured that adequate provision is made for requisite staffing needed for proper implementation of the programme.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) is visualised as a specialised and a Professional Agency capable of managing the anti-poverty programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development on the one hand and to effectively related these to the overall effort of poverty eradication in the district. In other words, while the DRDA will continue to watch over and ensure effective utilisation of the funds intended for anti-poverty programmes, it need to develop a far greater understanding of the processes necessary for poverty eradication. It will also need to develop the capacity to build synergies among different agencies involved for the most effective results. It will therefore need to develop distinctive capabilities rather than perform tasks that are legitimately in the domain of the PRI’s or the Line Departments. The role of the DRDA will therefore be distinct from all the other Agencies, including the Zilla Parishad.
DRDA’s must themselves be more professional and should be able to interact effectively with various other agencies. They are expected to co-ordinate with the Line Departments, the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the banks and other financial institutions, the NGOs as well as the Technical Institutions, with a view to gather the support and resources required for poverty reduction effort in the district. It shall be their endeavour and objective to secure inter-sectoral and Inter-Departmental Co-Ordination and co-operations for reducing poverty in the district. It is their ability to co-ordinate and bring about a convergence of approach among different agencies for poverty alleviations that would set them apart. Hence, the present study is an attempt to evaluate the select schemes namely Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Anaith Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam (AGAMT) and Sampoorana Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) under DRDA in Madurai district.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To trace the evolution of DRDA in India with reference to Tamil Nadu.
2. To examine the origin, growth and development of District Rural Development Agency in Madurai district.
3. To identify the organizational structure of District Rural Development Agency in Madurai district.
4. To evaluate the role and functions of DRDA in Madurai district.
5. To analyse the policies, programmes and working of DRDA in Madurai district.
6. To make suggestions for strengthening District Rural Development Agency.

METHODOLOGY

The secondary sources of data are used in the study. The methodology of this research is based on a descriptive and analytical study. The necessary data for research are collected from the related organisation and from various libraries. More importantly the Documentary sources provide a source of information on many aspects of DRDA administration.

Sources of Data

The sources of data for the present study are secondary. The secondary sources of data are collected from various reputed journals, articles, files, records, Manuals and Departmental orders concerned with the Administration of District Rural Development Agency and other publications which are drawn from some others original data.
Moreover the secondary sources of data are collected from the Collector Office, Madurai district, District Rural Development Agency, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, Connemera Public Library, Chennai and District Library, Madurai.

**Tools of Analysis**

In order to analyse the performance of selected DRDA schemes, the arithmetic mean, coefficient of variation, trend and compound growth rate were calculated.

To evaluate select DRDA schemes, Taxonomic Method of analysis has been used.

**SCHEME OF WORK**

The report of the present study entitled “A Study on District Rural Development Agency with Special Reference to Madurai District” has been divided into seven chapters.

Chapter I introduces the subject and deals with District Rural Development Agency, Centrally sponsored programmes, Rural Housing, State sponsored programmes, special oriented programmes, Desert Development Programmes, Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme, review of literature,
statement of the problem, objectives, methodology, limitations and scheme of work.

Chapter II discusses the profile of the study area, Madurai district, in terms of geographical location, Administrative units, Population, literates, workers, Agricultural labourers, Revenue divisions and number of Urban and local bodies.

Chapter III deals with the organizational structure of DRDA, administration of DRDA, financial procedure, maintenance of accounts, implementation of various State Government schemes, selection of works and activities, contribution of public evaluation and monitoring.

Chapter IV analyses the function of select DRDA schemes namely (i) Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), (ii) Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam (AGAMT) and (iii) Sampoorna Grammen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY).

Chapter V analyses the performance of select DRDA schemes in Madurai district.

Chapter VI evaluates the select DRDA schemes block-wise and its growth and allocation of funds.

Chapter VII presents the summary of findings, conclusion and suggestions.