Chapter - III

FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES
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The district administration is a field unit of the Secretariat Administration of Manipur. Therefore, it is proposed to deal with the functional structure of the Manipur Secretariat.

Just like what is at the union level, each and every full-fledged state of India has a Secretariat of its own which is the highest echelon of the state administrative structure. It is the locus of all the authority exercised by the State Government. There exists various types of offices in the state varying in their structure, nature and range of functions and activities. At the apex of the pyramid sits the Secretariat, the office of the Secretary. The expression Secretariat is used to refer to the complex of departments whose heads administratively are secretaries and politically, are ministers. The secretary is the secretary to the government as a whole, not to the individual ministers. The places where the ministers have their office is known as a secretariat, which is located in the state’s capital. The word “secretariat” has been derived from the word “secret” that is something held back or withdrawn from general knowledge or view, unrevealed covert or confidential. ¹ The Constitution of India provided for a Legislative Assembly with a Council of Ministers for the State. ² The Council of Ministers of the State of Manipur consisted with the Chief Minister and other 32 Ministers. These Council of Ministers are required to aid and advice the Governor in the exercise of his functions. And again the main functions of the secretary is to advise the ministers. The ministers obviously cannot work all alone and need assistance. So, for the purposes of administration the governance of the state administration is

¹ Avasthi and Avasthi, Indian Administration (Agra: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, 1993), p. 113
² Basu D.D., Introduction to the Constitution of India (Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India Private Ltd., 1985) p. 38
divided into Ministries and departments which together constitute the “State Secretariat”. To implement the policies of the state, there are attached offices, sub-ordinate offices and other field agencies. Orders and instructions issued by the Secretariat are considered as orders of the State Government. The State Secretariat, thus, occupies a key position in the administrative hierarchy. Literally speaking, the Secretariat is nothing but a conglomeration of various ministries or departments of the State Government. The political heads of the departments are ministers while the administrative heads are secretaries to the government. The ministers are in charge of the departments and are answerable to the legislature for the activities therein.

The Secretariat is the only organization of the government which ensures “objectivity, continuity and consistency” in the administration. It is the chief authority to frame rules and principles of procedure for the working of the government activities. Truly, the Secretariat is the government.

The Secretariat is again divided into a number of administrative departments. A department exists of a hierarchy of a small number of officers with the secretary at the apex of the pyramid structure on a wide-base clerical personnel. The hierarchy consists of the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary and Assistant Secretary. There are also special Secretaries, Additional and Joint Secretaries in some departments of the Secretariat.

There are some differences between the Central Secretariat of India and its

3. Ramesh K. Arora and Rajni K. Goyal, Indian Public Administration (Delhi: Wishwa Prakashan, 1997), p.228
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
counter parts in U.K. British has a unitary form of government so there is one Secretariat for the whole country. Since India has a federal policy where there is a Central Secretariat at the central level and separate Secretariat for every State Government like that of Manipur.

The administrative organisational structure of the state of Manipur is the result of a long process of evolution dating back to some hundred of years and the process of growth is still continuing. It is not static but expanding and developing. In Manipur, during the British, the Durbar functioned in the same pattern as the present day secretariat. Manipur Secretariat was there eversince she was a Union Territory. A.K. Roy was the first Chief Secretary. Like its counterparts in the other states, the Manipur Secretariat is divided into sections and groups. The rules for the transaction of government business are contained in the Rules of Business of the state government. The list of subjects deals with various departments and sections; is provided in the Rules of Business and no change in the list can be made without the approval of the cabinet obtained through the General Administration Department which is headed by the Chief Secretary. The allocation of responsibilities among the various officers in the department is a matter to be decided through standing orders issued by the ministers in charge of each department.

**Internal Organization of a Secretariat Department**

A department is generally a 3-tiers organization. At the first/top level, there is the minister, at the middle level is the secretariat organization. And at the 3rd level is the executive organization consisting of the Directorate whose head may be known as Director, Director General, Inspector General, Chief Engineer etc. There is

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departmentalisation of the various department the secretariat organisation of Manipur. Departmentalisation according to its functions or purpose, means the grouping of all these subordinate administrative units in a department which are meant to achieve a major purpose or objective. All administrative services or units are meant to perform the same or similar problems, are grouped together in a department and whose basic is said to be major purpose or function. In the Government of Manipur, Department of Agriculture, Education, Public Works Department, etc. are the examples of departmentalisation on the basis of the performance of major function or purpose.

The Secretariat of Manipur is divided among a number of administrative department. Usually a secretary is the head of the department and more than one department could be placed in charge of the same secretary. A Secretariat department may be defined as “an organizational unit consisting of a Secretary to government together with a part of the state secretariat under his administrative control to which the responsibility for the performance of specified functions has been assigned under Rules of Business framed for this purpose”. A department is divided into divisions, branches and sections. A section is under the charge of a Section Officer. A branch is under the charge of an Under Secretary and it consists of two sections. Two branches constitute a division which is under the charge of a Deputy Secretary. The sub-ordinate staffs consists of assistants, upper division clerks, lower division clerks, steno-typists and typists. Below them comes the Class-IV employees who are mostly engaged in manual and inferior work. The classification and categorization and numbers of these employees differ from state to state. The Secretariat Department, in turn, is divided into divisions, divisions into branches and branches into sections. At the top of each department, there is an executive who is the minister.

7. Ibid, p.99
8. Ibid.
In a bigger department which is kept under a Cabinet Minister, a Minister of State, sometime Deputy Minister or Parliamentary Secretary assists the Cabinet Minister. The strength of Council of Ministers differ from time to time. After the general election of 1972, a United Legislative Party (ULP) ministry was formed in Manipur. The strength of 12 Council of Ministers which consists of 5 Deputy Ministers. And now and then the strength of Council of Ministers use to vary from Ministry to Ministry. But with the passing of Anti-Defection Law by the Parliament in 2004, the strength of ministry is fixed at 10%; but for small states or states of North Eastern India, the strength of ministry is slightly higher and is fixed at 12%.

In Manipur the ministers are generally laymen selected on political consideration. The reason for selecting a layman as a minister has become a common feature in Indian democracy. Minister as a political executive lays down broad policy of a particular department and is accountable to the assembly. The function of the department is to frame the policies and programmes as laid down by the minister. The minister is suppose to see the interests of all the people. It is the minister who establishes the link between the administration and the legislature. The secretaries who are civil servants of both central and state cadres (IAS & MCS) try to do their duties by giving expert advice, factual datas to ministers on all matters of policy-making and supervision of all aspects of the Government. In fact, the civil servants are indispensible to the system. Further, it is the duty of the civil servants to implement the decisions taken by the ministers faithfully and to keep him appraised of the administrative problems and prospects. The ministers on the other hand give neces-

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sary guidance to the civil servants in carrying out their policies and programmes. Warner is of the opinion that ministers need not have a knowledge of the work of the department over which he presides.\textsuperscript{10}

The officials of the Secretariat are not only involved in making-policy, they are also further concerned with the justification and defence of that policy against the attacks of opposition parties, affected interest groups, and the ever vigilant press. Whatever is done in the Secretariat has to be defended before Assembly Committees like that of Estimates Committee, Public Accounts Committee, Public-Sector undertaking Committee, Committee on Sub-Ordinate Legislature, etc. While they may be busy in planning proposals for legislation or finance, they may be asked to appear before Assembly Investigating Committee or collect material for answers to questions put to the ministers on the floor of the House.

For the purpose of execution of public policy and administrative works, the head of the departments of the Manipur Government are designated as Commissioner, Chief Engineer, Chief Conservator of Forest, Director, Inspector General etc. Some of these are assisted by many Additional Officer like Additional Director, Additional Chief Engineer, etc. Each head is assisted by a number of deputies, assistant like Deputy Director, Deputy Conservator of forest, Assistant Director, Assistant Commissioner etc. Who is in turn are assisted by divisionals like Divisional Inspector of Schools - Divisional Forest Officer etc.\textsuperscript{11} The hierarchical structure of the Manipur Secretariat are as follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} \textit{Statistical Handbook of Manipur} (Imphal: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, 2002), p. 283
\end{itemize}
Fig. Hierarchical Levels of Manipur Secretariat.

Chief Secretary
  ↓
Additional Chief Secretary
  ↓
Secretary/Commissioner in charge of different departments
  ↓
Deputy Secretary
  ↓
Joint Secretary
  ↓
Under Secretary
  ↓
Section Office

Since 2002, there have been 46 departments in the Manipur Secretariat. The Chief Minister heads a number of departments including Cabinet Secretariat, General Administration and Personal, while the Chief Secretary is secretary in charge of general administration.

The Directorates of the State Government assist the Secretariat in implementing and putting into practice the various policies, plans and programmes of the Secretariat.

Below the directorate level, there is the district level, headed by a Deputy Commissioner. District as a territorial unit, has been the most important level in the governmental hierarchy of line organization. There are some variations in territorial

organization at levels below and above the district for different states. Let us take for instance – The system of territorial commissioner does not exist in some states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh etc. There is no unit termed as tehsil or taluk in some states like Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, and Manipur etc. In Madhya Pradesh, the post of Divisional Commissioner was abolished once but only to be revived subsequently. But states have invariably retained the level of district in line organization of administration. It is because the district is the most convenient level both for the public and for the government to effectively interact with each other. It is a time tested institution.

The Deputy Commissioner as the head of the district, is in overall in-charge of the district establishments of various departments. All administrative and developmental activities of the district that are carried on by the departments in the district, are under his jurisdiction, supervision and control. The development departments are in fact the integral parts of his office. The DC is responsible for planning and executing various developmental schemes in the district and in order to discharge this responsibility, he functions in union with the district heads of the development departments.

Below the district level there is the sub-divisional level. The administrative responsibility of the sub-division is placed under the charge of a sub-divisional officer. He is the chief executive head of the sub-division. He may be a young recruit to the IAS or an Assistant Collector born on Manipur Administrative Service. In every sub-division there may be two to four tehsils. Each tehsil is headed by a Tehsildar who is also the executive magistrate. District was a unit with almost uniform connotation but it was not so with the sub-division. The sub-divisional officer was perceived differently in various states. For example, in the State of Arunachal Pradesh,
the administrative responsibility of the sub-division is placed under the charge of an EAC. (Extra-Assistant Commissioner) He is the chief executive of the sub-division.

Although the district is perhaps, the most important unit in the hierarchy of field administration, sub-division is a level where massive efforts are concentrated to translate the instructions or implementation of programmes. While retaining the overall control, the District Collector gets his things done through the organization down below, particularly sub-division and taluka or tehsil administrative units.

Sub-division are important in the field administration because of various reasons usually it is the first office where a Deputy Collector or an Assistant Collector independently handles the revenue, magisterial and other functions. Apart from powers, it is at the sub-divisional level in which regular inspection are quite detailed and enveloped a vast arena of activities at tehsil and block levels. Court work of course, is very important at the sub-divisional level under the contemporary situation where social tension get frequently released through violence, the sub-divisional magistracy acquires tremendous importance. Election as a function of the administration, has now become important as it has become a problem to have a free and fair election and conduct it peacefully. The sub-divisional authority has to make all the arrangements for the smooth holding of elections.

The sub-divisional officer has to preside over the courts to decide formal suits. He has to ensure proper and up-to-date maintenance of land records and to see that all disputes are settled without disturbance to the public peace. He has to tour extensively, make required member of night halts away from the sub-divisional
headquarters and receive petitions for proper handling of grievances.\textsuperscript{13} Emergencies like a murder causing intense feeling between two communities, dispute about the route of procession, famine, floods, etc. are not uncommon for the sub-divisional officer. Site inspections are also part of the SDO's job.\textsuperscript{14}

Almost all states have retained the system of sub-divisions though their forms vary. But after Independence the functions of a collector have undergone a big change with change in magisterial functions and conventional revenue work coupled with new responsibilities relating to elections, civil supplies, development administration etc., his work load has increased. With additional workload, the Collector finds it difficult to control everything from his level even though he may now be controlling a smaller territory programmes like land reforms, land assignments and issue of patta, etc. are under taken to fulfil the indication in the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India. To implement these programmes, the Collector has to entrust the tasks to the officers down the hierarchy while retaining the overall control. In order to attend to these new challenges some specific delegations to sub-divisional officers and other subordinate officers have been made which endorses the importance of levels below the collector.

Sub-division in common parlance in the civil administration means administrative unit immediately below the district level. There may be one or more sub-divisions in a district. Sub-division is a smaller unit in Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharastra etc. But in these states tehsil is yet another level below the sub-division. When an IAS recruit completes his training, he is usually posted in the

\textsuperscript{13} Dubey A.K., \textit{District Administration in India} (New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1995), p.29
\textsuperscript{14} Phillip Woodruff, \textit{Men Who Ruled India vol-II} (London: Jonathan Cape, 1965), pp.85-87
sub-division as his first independent assignment. This was also the practice with ICS during the British rule in India. The sub-division officers perform the trinity of functions, at lower level and under the control of the collector. But there exist some variation in the territorial constitution of the sub-division.

Likewise as in any other states of India, in the State of Manipur also there are sub-divisions. During the British regime for the convenience of revenue collection, the entire State administration was divided into sub-divisions, viz.,

1. Churachandpur sub-division
2. Tengnoupal sub-division
3. Ukhrul sub-division
4. Mao sub-division
5. Tamenlong sub-division
6. Sadar Hill sub-division, (Head-Quarters at Kangpokpi)
7. Imphal sub-division

In each sub-division, a sub-divisional officer was appointed in charge of the administration.

As already mentioned above, there was a Durbar. All the members of the Durbar were in-charges of different departments like Revenue, Forest, Agriculture, etc. There was a specially created post called Qazi who looked after the interest of the minority Muslims. The Durbar was headed by a British officer. He was known as Sotto Saheb or P.M.S.D (President of the Manipur State Durbar).

In each sub-division Amin, Zilladar etc. were appointed. Land records were prepared by the Amin or Kanungo. Zilladar was to collect the revenue. Rate of the revenue was fixed according to their land holding. SDC was the head of the revenue collection. In buying and selling of land etc., there is a Registration Office. The Deeds are signed on the stamp paper by the two party in presence of the Registration Officer. Records are maintained by the Registration Officer. But the hill regions had no land holding. Instead they paid Rs.2/- per homestead. Lambus were appointed to collect the revenue. Now the administrative responsibility of a sub-division is placed under the charge of an S.D.O. He is the chief executive of the sub-division and is in overall in-charge of the sub-division establishments of various departments. He supervises and controls any aspects of administrative and developmental activities that are carried on by the departments in the sub-division under his administrative jurisdiction. The office of the S.D.O. is closely associated with the offices of the development departments at the sub-divisional level.

Sub-Division Office in Manipur

The SDC who heads the sub-division collects revenue. He also carries out magisterial functions. In the hilly areas the customary law is important. So, in the hills criminal cases are settled according to the customary laws of the different communities who are inhabiting the hilly areas of the State. Village authorities are usually consulted by the SDC while settling such disputes. In the plain areas the sub-division is headed by SDO. The SDO is assisted by SDC in carrying out his functions. There exists clerical staff at the lower level who helps in smooth functioning of the sub-divisional office.
Next to the sub-divisional level, there is the circle level. The circle level is headed by a circles officer. He also acts as the block development officer. They function as local heads for all matters within their respective circles. The important functions of the CO are developmental activities, community development schemes, revenues works etc.

But in Manipur, circles though existing is of not much significance. Even though if it exists in some districts, it is only up to the SDC level. For example, Patsoi circle which recently turned to be a SDO level. Sekmai circle, Purul circle, Kakching Khunou etc. are some circles to be named. Next to the circle level and the lowest in the hierarchy of administrative structure of a district, comes the local or village level.

Basically India is a rural country. The average population of a village is about 360. The villages preserve the characteristic Indian life. It is in the village that one can find the original India. A normal village will contain 200 or 300 inhabitants; the houses, most of which are really huts or cabins, are sometimes concentrated, sometimes scattered. 17 These ancient village communities have been immortalized by Sir Charles Metcalfe, a leading civilian in the service of the East India Company, who writing in 1830, described these communities as “little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves; and almost independent of foreign relation; they seem to last where nothing else lasts. This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered; and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence”. 18

Village administration

The Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi also opined that independence should begin at bottom. Every village should be a republic with panchayats having full powers. Greater the powers of panchayats better for the people. This vision is enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Under Article 40 which states that the state shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers as may be necessary to enable to function as unit of self-government. In order to give practical shape to this very directive a number of committees were appointed from time to time viz Balwantrai Mehta Committee (1975), Ashok Mehta Committee (1977), L.M. Singhvi (1986) etc. Though India is predominantly a land of villages with 70% of its population living in villages. The British Government made no significant change to uplift the rural poor. They had deliberately neglected their duties and responsibilities; fortunately, few eminent Indian leaders came forward and did spadework with scant resources to uplift the rural poor and provide them some sort of dignified life. Mahatma Gandhi pleaded that political emancipation has no meaning unless it lifted the people from their poverty, ignorance, superstition and age-old caste animosities. He further spelt out about relevance of village for the country's people that if village perishes, India will perish, too. It will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost. The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited.

This institution of local government has flourished in India since time immemorial. They were known as panchayats or village governments. A proto-type of panchayati raj insititution was in existence during the Vedic period. Later a more refined form of panchayati system was visible in the village administration of the Cholas. Even in the period of Mughal rule in India one comes across the existence
of local self-governments. Abul Fazl’s *Ain-i-Akbari* gives a fair account of the existence of local government in India in those days.\(^{19}\)

Although local government existed in India in ancient times, in its present structure and style of functioning, it owes its existence to the British rule in India. Neither the system of village self-government that prevailed in earlier times nor the method of town government which was then in existence visualized the types of periodically elected representative government responsible to the electorate that had evolved in the west and was planted in India by the British Government.\(^{20}\) A beginning of local government may be said to have been made in 1687 when for the first time, a local governing body – a municipal corporation – was set up for the city of Madras. India was very much indebted to Lord Ripon whose famous resolutions were issued in 1882. That is why Ripon is regarded as the father of local self-government in India.

The modern panchayati raj system was first introduced in India in the year 1959 in Rajasthan. After independence, in some of the states, drastic changes have been introduced in the form of local self-government. The Madhya Pradesh Government took an important lead in this direction. This government has made drastic changes in the entire set-up of local self-government institutions in the state and introduced the Janapada set-up in 1948. The Janapada Scheme was the precursor of the panchayati raj institutions.\(^{21}\) The new Constitution enforced on January 26, 1950 gave constitutional importance to local self government but it abstained from giving constitutional status to it.

\(^{19}\) Khan M.I., *District Administration in India* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1997), p.36


\(^{21}\) Ibid.
system of government. At the apex is the supranational agency like the United Nations. The second tier comprises individual national governments functioning in accordance with their national constitutions within their national borders. The constituent units which are called states or provinces form the third tier. The fourth and bottom tier is the local government which is created by national and states enactments and functions within a limited jurisdiction as provided by various statutes.

The local government jurisdiction is limited to a specific area and its functions relate to the provision of civic amenities to the population living within its jurisdiction. It has no legislative powers. A local government functions within the provisions of the statute which has created it. Local government falls within the jurisdiction of the statute. So as expected, there are notable variation in nomenclature, pattern, local government and its working in various states, yet, there is an unusually high degree of uniformity in the system of local government in the country because historically local government in India is a product of an exceptionally centralised administrative system.

According to the committees instituted to look into the matter of the working of the local government Balwantrai Mehta recommended for the scheme of democratic decentralization with a three tier structure of local bodies, namely the directly elected panchayat at the village level, the panchayat samiti at the block level. A general survey of the Panchayati Raj reveals that the Mehta Committee report has been interpreted by the different states in the light of the conditions prevailing in their own territories. Thus over the year the system of Panchayati Raj has grown in size and heterogeneity. In 14 states/union territories there are a three tier system, while in four state/union territories a two-tier pattern functioned, and in new states/union

22. Ibid.
territories, it is a one-tier system. In most areas of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Manipur, these institutions are set up in conformity with the traditions and customs of the local people. In the last count in 1990, there were 2.20 lakhs village panchayats, 5.3 thousand panchayat samities and 371 zila parishads (including superseded institution.)

Like in other parts of the Indian Union, the western system of local government in Manipur was also created by the British. But she also had traditional system of village administration. In the pre-British period, she had her own system in the governance of its villages. It might be different from the present in its characteristics and functions but there were village organizations like singlup, leirup and keirup.

The British consider singlup to be resembling the panchayat of Bengal. There organization looked after the welfare of the villages and performed functions under the village headman. In this connection E.W. Dun remarked that “In the villages situated in the Manipur valley or clubs named singlup or wood clubs exist resembling the panchayats of Bengal. These clubs, under the sardar, or head of the village have the general control of it, and adjudicate in trifling cases arising in the village. In the event of a villager sinking into a state of extreme poverty, these clubs supply him with necessary food.”

However, these organizations do not reach the standard of the modern system of local self-government but they provide services to their own villages and try to develop them. In early period, Imphal, the capital of Manipur was divided into four

divisions: Khurai, Wangkhei, Khwai and Yaiskul. These divisions consisted of four or five villages. These four divisions of Imphal were put under the control of four lakpas, khwaillakpa, yaiskuilakpa, wangkheillakpa and khuraillakpa. They were not only the controller of their own circles but were also important ministers of the State.

Just like other states of India, Manipur has also adopted the system of Panchayati Raj. Accordingly the United Province Panchayat Raj Act 1947 (U.P. Act No. 2, 1947) has come into force. This Act in the State has embraced those areas other than the hill areas, Municipal Area cantonment area, and notified area etc. To enforce the U.P Panchayat Raj Act, the necessary rules were made in 1962.

According to the provisions of this U.P Panchayat Raj Act, the elections of that Gram Panchayat was held for the first time in 1964, (227 Gram Panchayats & 43 Nyaya Panchayats were established and started functioning from 01-09-64). The U.P. Panchayat Act, 1947 being a borrowed Act, was subsituted by Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1975. The first election to the panchayat under the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1975 was held in 1978. 107 Gram Panchayat, 37 Nyaya Panchayat and the 6 Panchayat Samities were constituted in 1978. The Act (M.P.R. Act 1975) provided for the establishment of 3 tiers system of panchayats viz., Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad. However only two tiers of panchayat i.e., village level (Gram Panchayat) and block level,(Panchayat Samiti) were constituted and the higher tier of Panchayat i.e., Zilla Parishad was not established. The second election to panchayats under the M.P.R. Act 1975 was held in the year 1985. 166 Gram Panchayats and 42 Nyaya Panchayats and 9 Panchayat Samitis

were constituted. The third election under this Act were held in 1991 constituting 166 Gram Panchayats, 42 Panchayts, 42 Nyaya Panchayats and 9 Panchayat Samitis.

The 73rd amendment to the constitution of India is a unique event in the political history of modern India. The salient features of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 consist of the existence of the Gram Sabha for every village or group of villager, a three tiers system of panchayats, direct election of members of panchayats from Territorial Constituencies, reservation of seats for SC/ST, SC/ST women, timely election to panchayats, devolution of powers and functions to panchayats to enable them to function as units of local self-government, establishment of Finance Commission, establishment of State Election Commission, bar to interference by courts in electoral matters etc.

This Act focuses on the development of social, economic and village infrastructures, enabling the rural masses to participate in the management of their own affairs through the process of democratic decentralization. In fact, the article 243-G of the Constitution of India envisages to enable the Panchayat at different levels to function as units of self-government in rural areas. Keeping in view the above objectives and also the provisions under section 35 and 61 of the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 and its Amendment, the government of Manipur has devolved some of the powers and functions relating to 29 items listed in the 11th scheduled of the Constitution.

The Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 provides for establishment of two tier panchayat system viz., Gram Panchayat and Jilla Parishad at the district level there is no provision for establishment of intermediate level panchayat as envisaged in the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 which states that the panchayats at the
intermediate level may not be constituted in a state having a population not exceeding 20 lakhs. The first general election to Panchayat under the M.P.R., Act 1994, was held on March 31, 1997. 166 Gram Panchayats and 4 Zilla Parishad (Imphal East Zilla Parishad, Imphal West Zilla Parishad, Thoubal Zilla Parishad and Bishenupur Zilla Parishad) have been constituted. The second general election to this new Act was held in 2002.

Gram sabha at village level. According to the provisions of the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, there shall be a Gram Sabha for a village or a group of adjoining villages having population of not less than 3000 and not more than 6000 subject to such variation not being larger than 2000 as may be necessary on consideration of the local situation. The Gram Sabha shall consists of all persons whose name are included in the electoral rolls within the area of Gram Sabha. There shall be constituted Gram Panchayat for every Gram Sabha. A Gram Panchayat shall consists of the Pradhan and such number of directly elected members and one member for every six hundred population or part there-of of the Gram Panchayat area shall be elected as a member of such Panchayat.

Zilla parishad at district level. There shall be a Zilla Parishad for the valley districts, wherein this Panchayati Raj Act are effective. The Zilla Parishad shall consists of the members directly elected from the territorial constituencies in the district, the members of the house of people and the members of the State Legislative Assembly representing a part or whole of the district whose constituencies lie within the district and 10% of the pradhans of the Gram Panchayats in the district.

Though the population of Manipur has by now crossed the 20 lakhs limit, the formation of the Panchayat Samiti is yet to be done. There are at present, 165 Gram
Panchayats and 4 Jilla Parishads. The total number of elected representative of Gram Panchayats and Jilla Parishads are 1707 (including 165 Pradhans) and 61 (including 4 adhyakshas and 4 up-adhyakasas). The number of seat reserved for and held by women are 622 at the Gram Panchayat level and 22 at the Zilla Parishad level. Again out of the four level, the number of SC/ST male is 53 whereas SC/ST women are 27. 22 seats for women and 4 seats for SC/ST are reserved at the Zilla Parishad level. Out of the 165 seats of Pradhans, 54 seats are reserved for women.

### Local Authorities in the Districts

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of the District/ C.D.Block</th>
<th>No. of Z.P</th>
<th>No. of Constituency</th>
<th>No. of Gram Sabha</th>
<th>No. of Pradhans</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>1,555</td>
<td>165</td>
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</table>

Source: Directorate of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Manipur.
In the State, Panchayats are carrying out manifold developmental and judicial functions for the upliftment of the villages. The village panchayat is a forum for local self-government which is composed of elected representatives of the village people. The Panchayat Samiti looks after all the development work at the block levels. The role and importance of local governments are increasing day by day. Local governments have been undertaking new activities which either reauthorize the conduct of the citizens or are in the nature of services such as provision of mass transport, constructions of houses for the poor, supply of electricity, held centres, parks, playgrounds, etc. In fact local government is today much more important in the daily life of a citizen than the state of Central Government. The function seems to be increasing more in future with the changes taking place in today's world. Williams A. Robson rightly remarks: "Local authorities have greater opportunities today than even before. If the powers of the Central Government are increasing, so are the powers of the local council".  

The Panchayats are in existence only in the plain areas. In the hill areas instead of the panchayats, there are Hill Autonomous District Councils. The Autonomous District Councils in the hill areas have come into existence along with the establishment of Manipur as a full-fledged state in 1972. Each district council for an autonomous district in Manipur shall have 18 seats to be fill by persons chosen by the district election on the basis of adult franchise from territorial constitution. At present there are 6 Autonomous District Council for the hill districts. They are:

i. Manipur North Autonomous District Council
ii. Sadar Hill Autonomous District Council
iii. Manipur East Autonomous District Council

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iv. Manipur South Autonomous District Council, Churachandpur
v) Tengnoupal Autonomous District Council, Chandel
vi) Manipur West Autonomous District Council, Tamenglong.

The Manipur (Hill Areas) Village Authorities Act, 1956 provide the local level government in the form of Village Authorities to those villages which have at least 20 tax-paying households. The office of the Khullakpa or Chief has been institutionalised in the statute. The Deputy Commissioner, the SDO/SDC and the District level department, the District Councils and the Village Authorities look after the administration of the hill areas.

In 1972, when Manipur state introduced the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1972. According to this Act, each District Council consists of 18 members elected directly on the basis of adult suffrage. There are also 2 nominated non-officials in the Council. There a chairman and vice chairman elected from among the members of the Council. The term of their office is 5 years.

As regards their powers and functions, the District Councils have control over some moveable and immovable property, construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, channels and buildings, establishment and management of dispensaries and primary school, markets, animals ponds, allotment of land for the purpose of

25 Government of Manipur, Vide Government Order No. 18/1/71-Sc, pl.dt. February 14, 1972
agriculture, grazing or residential purposes, regulation of the practice of jhum and shifting cultivation etc. The District Councils also have the power to collect taxes, professional tax, trade, animals, vehicles, beats and entry of goods into a market for sale.\(^\text{30}\)

The position of the Gram Sabhas and the Gram Panchayats are like that of the villages and the village authorities. Both the members of the Gram Panchayats and the Village Authorities are headed by the elected pradhans and up-pradhans, and the Village Authorities are headed by the chiefs wherever they are as ex-officio chairman.

But now at present Autonomous District Council are defunct for more than one decade. They are demanding for the introduction of the VI Schedule in the hill areas. A section of the intellectuals among the tribes of Manipur that what with the internal strife and conflict for separate homeland etc. the principle of internal self-determination and the strategy of sustainable self-development or ethno-development would better ensure the beginning of the process of emancipation of the tribal people. Internal self-determination for autonomy over their economies, territories, culture and future would be a powerful tool for genuine democracy and federalism.

In the foregoing pages the various functional structures of the different levels of a district in a state viz district, sub-division, circle and local grassroot level etc. has been discussed along with its administrative authorities.

In summing up it can be shown as follows:

- **Council of Ministers**
  - Ministerial Level
    - Legislative Assembly
    - Union Territory Level
      - Secretariat
  - Secretariat Level
    - Directorate
  - Directorate Level
    - District
      - District Level
        - Divisions
          - Sub-Divisions
  - Sub-Divisional Level
    - Circles
      - Circle Level
        - Gram Panchayats
  - Local Level
Levels of Administrative Authorities

District level. The district level is headed by the District Collector. The district officer is a 'My Baap' or 'total Government', the benign patriarch presiding over the destiny of the Indian rural mass. The district officer or the collector is the kingpin of the district administration in India. The district officer was designated to be the central authority, the **Hakim** per excellence of his district. An efficient civil service, is the quintessence of any government. It lends credence, viability and plausibility to the government of the day. According to O. Glenn Stahl, "No government can be much better than its civil service permits it to be political leadership however, able and well intentioned, cannot put verity far beyond its bureaucracy". The collectors are involved in the crucial task of policy implementation as heads of the departments and as district officials. The role of the collectors is to ensure that the services are 'free from communal or petty bias', and (b) provide administrative leadership for other services ensuring commitment and sense of security.

The civil service is an important instrument of state to administer its people and manage the affairs. It is a permanent entity considered to be fair, invisible, impartial and unselfish. Governments in democracies come and go but civil servants remain. Civil servants are therefore considered to be the pillars of the state. In older days the king used to be born or dead but his officials remained to ensure continuity, fairness and impartiality in managing the affairs of the kingdom. The district officer

acts as the connecting link between the people and government. He and his staff are like the vehicles for conveying the orders of the government to the people. Therefore he is discribed as the eye, the ear, the mouth and the hand of the state government within the district.

The district officer occupies an important place in the state administration as he is the one who is in touch with the realities of the situation and has all the first hand information of all the districts. So, much depends on his resource, efficiency and presence of mind, for the smooth course of administration in the district and state at large. The office of this collector has been existing in some form or the other since ancient times. As mentioned above in chapter I in the evolution of District Administration, the Vedic literature and Manu Smriti strengthens the view that some form of arrangements were made even in times immemorial for the management of social and economic affairs of the people. The real landmark in the emergence of the office of the collector was the period of Mauryas. They had divided the entire kingdom into territorial units for administrative convenience and each such “unit was placed under an agent of the imperial authority”. The system evolved by the Mauryas was so effective and worthwhile that it followed by all succeeding emperors for centuries without introducing any radical reform. Another milestone in the evolution of the office of the collector was the period of the Mughals. During the Mughals, administration of Sarkar (District) was laid upon three officers namely the Amalguzar, the Qazi and the Mir Adil and the Faujdar. The period of the Britishers was the real landmark in the emergence of present office (1765), the East India Company for the first time took over the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. But the Company did not appoint its own officials for the collection of land revenue erstwhile due to lack of experience of the revenue administration. Moreover, the Company was not

in a mood to take risk when spate of wars were on, therefore, handed over the following task to the revenue officials of the Nawab by the medium of “ties of interest, until experience should render their assistance less necessary”. Hence forth, the Company commenced the process of revamping district administration in general and revenue in particular.

First attempt in this direction was initiated in 1769-70 by appointing covenanted servants as ‘supervisors’. They were empowered to report on “the state, produce and capacity of lands; the amount of revenues, the cesses or arbitrary taxes, and of all demands whatsoever which were made of the rayots either by the Government Zamindars or the collectors (Amils) with the manner of collecting them, and the gradual rise of every new imposition.” The supervisors were burdened with duties and responsibilities to ascertain state of peace, if necessary, summon Qazis and Brahmins in view to make sure that they had Sanad. The supervisors had been given exorbitant powers with a view to make them familiar with every aspect of work apart from executive, judiciary and revenue matters. But strategy of the Company to appoint supervisors badly failed due to non-availability of trained and experienced men. Besides, other authorities viz., Zamindars, rayots and native officers had not enthusiastically assisted them in their working. Undoubtedly an experiment to field supervisors was a step forward to rejuvenate old style of revenue records and gain experience to put charge of revenue collection to the covenanted servants. The revenue was the backbone of the colonial rule in India, and we see in supervisors, the predecessors of the present day collectors.

35. Ghosal A.K., Civil Service in India Under The East India Company (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1944), p.142
In such a dilemma, the East India Company finally came to the conclusion to ‘stand forth as diwan’ and carry on entire administration through the agency of the Company’s covenanted servants. The Court of Directors’ promulgation of May 14, 1772, nominated already working supervisors as collectors. Under the new setup, they would look after the management and collection of land revenue, apart from inspection, investigation and reporting to the government. This effort led the existence of the office of the collector of present day. The post was abolished in 1773 but restored in 1781. Finally in 1786, a rational scheme was adopted according to which districts were organized into regular fiscal units, each under a collector. In 1787, the administration of revenue, civil justice and magistracy was united in the office of district collector.

Since independence, its role has become increasingly multidimensional. The main factors influencing the emergent role of the collector are democratic set-up in the country, vigorous attempts at decentralization, increasing developmental responsibilities, the rise of public opinion. And also the introduction of the community development programme, inauguration of the Panchayati Raj and the acceptance of the concept of the welfare state have completely changed the emphasis on the duties of this office. From the maintenance of law and order and the collection of revenue, the major emphasis has now shifted to the development of human and material resources and the elimination of poverty and want. Therefore, in the changed circumstances, the collectors are expected to work with the people and cannot afford to keep himself aloof from them. A collector has to spend a lot of time in listening to the grievances of the people. He has also to play much more active role in the social and cultural life of the district. The collector is no longer the sole
‘eyes and ears’ of the government as was the case under the British rule. He has become largely an instrument of execution of government policies and programmes formulated by the ruling political party. Inspite of all these changes, the collector is still the backbone of the district administration.  

The Administrative Units as on 16-08-2000 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>SUB-DIVISIONS</th>
<th>SDC CIRCLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Imphal</td>
<td>1. Imphal East I</td>
<td>1. Porompat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Imphal East II</td>
<td>1. Sawombung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Imphal West</td>
<td>1. Imphal West</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lamphel</td>
<td>Central</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Wangoi</td>
<td>1. Hiyangthang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Imphal West II</td>
<td>2. Mayang Imphal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thoubal</td>
<td>1. Thoubal</td>
<td>1. Lilong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Yairipok</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Thoubal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>4. Heirol</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kakching</th>
<th>Bishnupur</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Ukhrul Central</th>
<th>Chingai</th>
<th>Kamjong</th>
<th>Phungyar</th>
<th>Kasomkhullen</th>
<th>Mao-Maram</th>
<th>Saikul (Sadar Hills)</th>
<th>Kangpoki (Sadar Hill West)</th>
<th>Paomata (Purul)</th>
<th>Chandel</th>
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</thead>
</table>
2. Chakpikarong
1. Chakpikarong

2. Khengjong
1. Chandel

3. Chandel

1. Tamenglong
2. Haochong

1. Tamenglong

2. Tamenglong North
1. Tamei
(Tamei)
2. Kuilong

2. Tamenglong North

1. Tamei

(Tamei)

1. Tamei

2. Kuilong

3. Tamenlong West

1. Tousem
2. Thuilong
(Tousem)

1. Tousem

2. Thuilong

4. Nungba

1. Nungba
2. Nongpi
3. Noney
4. Khaipum

4. Nungba

2. Nongpi

3. Noney

4. Khaipum

8. Churachandpur
1. Churachandpur

1. Churachandpur

2. Sangaikot

2. Thanlon

1. Thanlon

2. Molnom

3. Phaijong

3. Tipaimukh

1. Tipaimukh

2. Sihapurikhal

4. Henglep

1. Henglep

2. Chang Khunou

5. Singhat

1. Singhat

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2002
As Lord Wavell stated, “English would be remembered not by this institution or that but by the ideals they left behind of what a district officer should be”. Nowhere else in the world there is any institution resembling the district officers of India.

Role of Deputy Commissioner

The district officer is an over-all revenue (R), Magisterial (M) and executive (E) officer performing these functions in the district. In the same way as in any state of India, the district officer’s functions are the same, so it is applicable to the district officers of the State of Manipur. As a collector he is responsible for the collection of land revenue both on agricultural and non-agricultural land in the district, and also forest revenue. He is in-charge of the treasury and is responsible for the maintenance of the receipt, disbursement and the safe custody of the valuable which it contains. In ancient times in Manipur, Nongthangba was the person in charge of the finance of the State. He was assisted by several officials called Shellungbas. Each shellungbas was in-charge of crown lands that were directly cultivated through labourers or through tenants. The State received its revenues from sources like land revenue, salt tax, herds tax, taxes on fish and ponies and foreigners.

The R.M.E. functions of the Deputy Commissioner are discussed further in detail as follows:

Revenue. The district administration is basically a revenue administration. Its prime concern is to ascertain and sustain farmer’s right on the land and collect revenue for the viability of the government. The collector is an ancient designation of

38. Ibid.
the present district magistrate, given to him in view of his responsibilities in the field of land revenue and its collection. Land revenue, and the collection of revenue provides the function which gives the head of the district the designation by which he is more commonly known than by any other, the collector. Land revenue is the revenue levied upon the surface of the land; theoretically it is levied upon the surface of the land. In ancient and pre-Mughal times this was literally true. In those times, the local king was entitled to take a share of the farmers produce. The farmer in return enjoyed the king’s protection from the enemies, both external and internal and sometimes the king’s patronage. The produce of the field would be stacked on the village threshing floor and made into a number of equal heaps, often sixteen for convenience of reckoning, of these, the share of the king was separated and made over to him or to his functionaries. In ancient period, there was no intermediary. The vast system of intermediaries, landholders, zamindars and the rest came much later.

The Mughal period is characterized eminently by the reign of Akbar. With the help of his minister, the famous Todar Mal, Akbar introduced what may be termed as the modern system of land revenue. The principal reforms of Akbar’s reign included the assessment of land revenue as well as its payment in cash instead of in kind. The old concept of a fixed percentage of a variable harvest has been changed. The revenue was assessed and fixed for a term of years. The new system of cash assessments fixed for a period of years was accompanied by the extensive establishment of a fairly unified system of account keeping and land records. This as much as anything else seems to be a principal cause contributing to the general uniformity in matters of land revenue throughout the country.

40. Khera S.S., District Administration in India (Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1979), p.253
But after Akbar, the Mughal empire went into an increasing decline. One of the results of the increasing weakness of the Mughal power at the center was the practice of farming out large tracts of land in return for cash payments. The local governors of the Mughal regime began to assume autonomy and in some cases declared their independence of the center. Similarly, local chieftains began to assert themselves, an inevitable consequence of weakness at the center. These events provided the circumstance of a weakened relationship between the king acting directly or through his own functionaries on the one hand the actual tiller of the land, the farmer, on the other. A system of intermediaries grew up. The existence of an intermediary helps to make things easier in many ways the principal at least for the time being.

Another milestone in the evolution of land system was the British period. In case of taxes, they levied the easiest of all taxes, the tax on land. They did it because no one could not hide one’s and there was less scope of cheating and embezzlement. The power to collect taxes in time was vested in the collectors. They were prohibited from taking part in trade activities either for the Company or for themselves.\footnote{Ibid. p.162}

Before the attainment of Independence in 1947, three systems of land Zamindari, Ryotwari and Mahalwari were in operation, more or less in all the states of India. One system different from other only on the ground of mode of payment of land revenue otherwise their aims were same as to collect land revenue. The land system in nature varies from most simple to the most complex one. For instance, the jhum cultivation for north eastern states is very simple because land revenue is determined with the help of instruments being used for cultivation and is not based...
on the area of the land. Whilst in case of Orissa, so many land systems are in opera-
tion, that cannot be classified easily. Thus, for the sake of convenience, it is useful to
deal with the traditional land system because they have not been completely changed
even now and have influenced the entire structure of administration.

The land administration comes under the state list. But it so happens that
most of the states have legislated on several aspects of land administration which
bear resemblance with each other to a certain extent.

The collector is the head of the revenue administration of the district. He and
his staff's principal duty is to collect land revenue in full without any delay in the
district. He is also responsible for proper maintenance of accounts and safe custody
of land records. Apart from land revenue, he also collects government dues viz.,
taccavi loans, income-tax dues and dues which belong to other departments if termed
as land revenue of the district. The collector also checks the staff with the aim to
ensure that entries made in the record registers are correct and up-to-date.

In a rural country like India which is on the path of development, the people of
all walks of life reach to the collector to get redressal of their grievances. This officer
listens to them carefully and takes quick actions to remove all kinds of their tensions
and confrontations, for instance he has to settle down agriculture disputes and
ensure adequate water for the field and judicious distribution of fertilizers and seeds.
The collector has to make sure that necessary credit facilities are extended to the
farmers in time and they are getting fair price for their yields. 42

42. Vepa K. Ram., "The Collector in the Nineteen Sixties in Different States" (New Delhi: Indian
Apart from agricultural disputes, the collector’s hear appeals against the misuse of power and biased decision taken by his subordinate officers. All appeals against the collector’s decision are heard by the divisional commissioner and by the Board of Revenue. He is the highest in controlling the entire staff of the district either pertaining to revenue field or other fields of importance. He appoints and dismisses various village level officers. Earlier the power of appointment and termination of village headman and village accountant was rested with the collector but for the sake of convenience these powers now have been delegated to the sub-divisional officers. But appellate authority in these matters still rests with the collector. He has been empowered to appoint revenue staff for the collectorate and clerks and peons for various tehsils and sub-divisions. He writes Annual Confidential Rolls (ACR) of SDOs’ Tehsildars and so on. On the basis of annual progress report employees get promotions for their outstanding and sincere works and face disciplinary actions for erring duties and responsibilities. He regularly supervises and inspects every sub-divisional office and carrying out efficiently and effectively his statutory and administrative duties. The collector also has been empowered fully to eschew encroachments on government lands. He has to maintain irrigation work in proper condition for the better outcome of crops.

As the head of the revenue administration of the district, the foremost task of the collector is the assessment and collection of land revenue. S.S. Khera points out two principles of revenue collection for the district officers. The first is that revenue which is assessed, must be collected in full. Any tendency to relax or depart from this principle will make the collection of the revenue extremely difficult. The second principle predicates timely collection of taxes.  

be of several types, such as irrigation dues, income-tax-dues, agricultural dues, canal dues, taccavi loans and distress taccavi.

Agricultural loans (taccavi or tagai) are distributed by the collector and his staff, relief works have to be taken upon a very extensive scale in case of a famine, camps may have to be opened, seeds distributed, cattle and agricultural implements supplied, land revenue and rents remitted or suspended. The Deputy Commissioner has some powers in respect of local bodies like municipalities, local boards and village panchayats.

Magisterial functions. The code of criminal procedure, 1973 is the source of authority for the district magistrate. Section 20 (1) of the code contains provisions regarding appointment of a District Magistrate. In Manipur the Deputy Commissioner has two-fold duties. They are executive and judicial duties. All other Executive Magistrates in the district are sub-ordinate to him. The District Magistrate can perform all those functions, which an Executive Magistrate is empowered to discharge. The hierarchy of District Magistracy is mainly for functioning in accordance with the allocation of business to different Executive Magistrates. The Sub-Divisional Magistrate has got elaborate system of regular court work. However, important and sensitive matters are directly dealt with by the District Magistrate. He is concerned with the preventive sections of the Criminal Procedures Code such as sections 107,133,144,145,147 etc. He also decides important criminal cases such as high official accused of corruption, big scandals

concerning big business, any officers shirking his responsibilities. The section 4 of the Police Act, 1861 says that the police force under the stewardship of the Superintendent of Police (SP) shall function in the district subject to the Magistrate. Also section 33 of this Act provides for the general control of the District Magistrate. Similarly the Police Act enacted by various state governments contain like provisions, but dictates like the District Magistrate should not take such action that is likely to weaken the authority of the Superintendent of Police is usually contained in many of the manuals of the state police. Legal position is strictly in accordance with the statute and rules there under but there is no denying the fact that proper understanding between the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police is essential to secure perfect co-ordination. Apart from this, the District Magistrate also receives the details of cases before various criminal courts attended by the Assistant Public Prosecutors and the Public Prosecutor. District Magistrates may suitably instruct the Assistant Public Prosecutors to make effort to secure early disposal of cases. The Public Prosecutor is appointed by the government. In most of the states, the District Magistrate, in consultation with district judge, prepares a panel of outstanding advocates which is sent to the government. The government may appoint any one of them as the public prosecutor. Amidst all such multifarious tasks, Magistrate’s chief job is to attend to law and order situation so as to ensure peace and prevalence of public tranquility. It is the duty of the District Magistrate to maintain law and order in the district.

In our State of Manipur the District Magistrate, also carries out the function of registration, alteration and partition of holdings, management of loans to agriculturists, settlement of disputes, welfare functions like famine relief, municipalities, roads, education etc. and essential functions like police, jails, local taxation, sanitation and dispensaries etc.

Executive. The DC is the executive head of the District. His main executive function is to carry out the governmental plans and policies. He executes and puts into practice all these plans and functions with the help of his official staff and with the help of the concerned department functioning at the district level. He co-ordinates the activities of the various departments. He also controls the hierarchy of officials functioning under him from district level down to the village level.

The D.C. performs various executive functions in the district as the representative of the government. He acts as the channel of communication between the government and the public. He keeps the government informed of all happenings in the district and keeps the public informed of the policies and decisions of the government. He acts as the link between sitting at the capital and the people living in rural areas.

The D.C. assists the various departments in the performance of their activities and co-ordinate the activities of the various departments functioning at the district level. In the event of natural calamities like floods, famines, land slides, heavy rains and wind resulting into cyclone, flash floods, earthquakes etc. put the district administration to a rigorous test. In ordinary course, when it is possible to predict or at least anticipate the events, the district administration can gear up well in advance to face the eventualities. Usually the district office has a contingency plan or the set of instructions upon which relief and rescue operations can be conducted. Crisis administration is usually through the hierarchy itself and more often than not, human resources are mobilised from most of the offices under the collector's control.

The DC is the ex-officio chairman of different committees where officials and

non-officials are represented. He acts as the cementing force between officials and chairman of the Zilla-Parishad. In this capacity he is connected with various developmental activities. He has also link with the administration of Gram Panchayats. He acts as the link between the government and local authorities. Government approves local plans and schemes on the basis of the recommendation of the DC; without his recommendation, a local authority cannot expect to get financial assistance from the government. Other than the above mentioned duties, he also performs various miscellaneous duties. It includes verification, granting and renewal of areas license, extention of stay on a valid passport held by a foreign national, granting of cement licence and quota when levy cement is there. He attends VIP duties and protocol functions, general co-ordination at district level, treasury functions, public relations at district level, supervision of census operations, national saving etc. The main functions of the district officers in Manipur, like that of district officers of other states and countries is to administer the law faithfully, impartially and with political neutrality. This professional class of civil servants has been called by Finer “brain trust” because they translate laws and policies into action.\textsuperscript{48} In earlier times the district officers in Manipur were limited. Its main emphasis was more on the maintenance of law and order and for the implementation of those laws. With the introduction of the concept of welfare state, the functions of district officers have been increased. Besides, they have to work for the welfare of the community and have to place public will before private gain.

This post of the district officer has been in question for a long time. Some section of the society feels that it is quite undemocratic and quite unsuitable for a democratic country like India. They argue that it is not apt to give such large and regulated powers to a single individual. There is attack from other services also

\textsuperscript{48} Finer, H.\textit{ Theory & Practice of Modern Government} (Greenwood: FIMG, 1989), p. 781
especially the specialists. They complained that a generalist civil servant or district officer is ill-equipped to perform all the special jobs assigned to him, for which he does not possess any special knowledge or qualification or training. It is also stated that he is already too overburdened with his law and order and other miscellaneous responsibilities to give attention to other aspects like rural development. But whatever the matter may be, it clearly shows that our system of governance needs the post of district officer. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why this district officers still exists amidst much protest from other section. And also now and then many reforms are introduced to suit the changing situations of the present society. And above all these, recently various attempts have been made to make the office of the district officer more amenable to popular control. His judicial powers have been greatly reduced, while some of his other powers have been constituted at the district level to assist and advise the district officer in discharge of his duties.

**Organization of the collectorate.** The collector's office is a big establishment. Usually, it has a few branches like general, recovery, civil supplies, land reforms etc. There are a few officers of the rank of Deputy Collector or Additional District Magistrate who look after one or more of these branches.

**Sub-divisonal level**

Below the district level, there are sub-divisions. These administrative units below the district levels (sub-divisions, tehsils, blocks and villages) are equally important for the purpose of actual implementation of decisions and programmes. Information, reports or details furnished by these subordinate offices form a very important part of the total corpus of information which serves as the basis of decision-making at the district level. Different states have different origins of the
administrative set-up because the circumstances under the nucleus around which they developed were different. But despite diversity in overall administrative set-up, there is considerable similarity in the district administrative pattern obtaining in various states. Reasons of such similarities may be attributed to similarities in objectives of the district administration. This at least partly, also explains why sub-division has been retained as a level in the hierarchy of field administration in different states.

Sub-division is usually the first independent charge of a fresh recruit to the IAS. It is at this level that the young officers learn the intricacies of administration through the hard way of experience. He is subordinate to and works under the supervision, guidance, control and directions of the D.C. Besides, he learns to identify the priority areas and assumes leadership to afford better service to the people. The D.C. hardly finds enough time from his routine duties to look after each and every problem of rural areas particularly in large district, the district officer has multifarious duties and engagements. In such situations he cannot give personal attention to the problems. The SDO/BDO comes into the scene here. He is assisted by these officers who are of additional collector’s rank. They look after revenue and law and order problems.

During the British days and until when the judiciary was completely separated from the executive real limbs of the district officers were his SDOs. How far the district officer is effective, depends to a large extent, on the quality of his additional collectors, SDOs and other subordinate staff, as he functions more as a leader of a team than as a mere executive.

50. Ibid.
The SDOs are the officers who are in direct contact with Block Developments Officers (BDOs) and Circle Officers (CO). The BDOs/COs are in contact with the masses and are thus the real executors of the governmental programmes. The SDOs assist the district officer in payment of compensation to ex-intermediaries, settlement of government and public lands and implementation of land reforms programme. The size of the sub-divisional level officers varies from state to state.

For an officer borne on the State Administrative Service, the sub-divisional posting may not be the first assignment. In Bihar, for example, a Deputy Collector may first be posted either in the collectorate or as an Executive Magistrate in the Sub-Divisional Office or as a Block Development Officer.

In Manipur the sub-divisions are under Sub-Divisional Officers who are senior members of Manipur Civil Service. The general revenue and magisterial charge of the sub-division is vested in the SDO subject to the control of the Deputy Commissioner (DC). The SDO is to the sub-division what the DC is to the district.

A Sub-Divisional Office deals with a number of subjects, papers and files. The SDOs deals with certain types of cases under the code of criminal procedure, 1973 in his capacity as the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM). He also deals with revenue cases in his capacity as the SDO. The SDO may also be declared as collector for the purpose of functioning under certain order or legislations like Land Acquisition Act and Public Demand Recovery Acts of various states. The SDO also deals with matters relating to elections, crisis administration, civil supplies, administration of social security schemes, handling of public grievances and the like. All these make
the SDOs job quite challenging and interesting as he has to interact with a number of agencies or authorities in course of discharge of his functions. However, his interaction with police, collector, other senior officers, officers of other departments which are not under his administrative control and judiciary is quite intensive and important.

**RME functions of SDO's.** Land Revenue Administration includes action under Land Revenue and Tenancy Acts eviction of encroachments upon government. Land, transfer of land, collection of public revenue due on land, mutation and transfer of registry of land, land utilization etc. Apart from implementing various land and revenue acts, appeals arising from the decision of subordinate officers usually lie before the S.D.O.viz., appeals against all tax assessments like building tax and plantation tax, mutation and transfer of registry appeals, appeals against encroachments and survey and measurement decisions and miscellaneous revenue appeals.

Apart from acquisition and relinquishment, land transfer is another important area concerning the sub-divisional administration. Land transfer refers to the transfer of government land to other governmental agencies or local bodies.

**Land reforms.** Land reforms, including tenancy reforms have been perceived as one of the most important policies of rural development in India. These reforms aim at breaking the old feudal socio-economic structure of rural India to ensure greater filling to modernization of agriculture and enhancement in agricultural production. States have enacted laws relating to land reforms legislation is an elaborate administrative exercise.

51. *India* (New Delhi: Government of India Publication, 1990), p.455
**Magisterial.** When the SDO functions as a court, he acts in the capacity of the SDM. Hence, full designation would be the term as SDO and SDM. Just like the DM, the SDM also derives his powers from the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The sub-section (IV) of section 6 of the code contains the provision for the cutive magistrate as a class of the criminal court. The sub-section (IV) of section 20 the Criminal Procedure Code reads as follows:

"The State Government may place an Executive Magistrate in charge of a sub-division and may relieve him of the charge as occasion requires and the Magistrate so placed in charge of a sub-division shall be called Sub-Divisional-Magistrate."

The section 23 of the code specifies that the SDM shall be sub-ordinate to the DM and all other Executive Magistrates exercising power in a sub-division shall be subordinate to the SDM, subject to general control of the District Magistrate. Section 20 (2) of the Cr.p.c. provides for Additional District Magistrate. Section 23 of the code makes it clear that all executive Magistrates in the district, other than the ADM. The ADM is appointed by the government and he had such powers of the DM as might have been directed by the government. The Cr.p.c. contains specific provisions regarding such items as search and arrest, preventive steps for ensuring peace and good tranquility, disputes as to immovable property, public nuisance etc. Maintenance of law and order is one of the most important functions of the SDM and the police. Whereas police looks after the major functions of criminal administration up to the state of prosecution which includes crime detection and investigation and also, administration of the force itself, it does so in close liaison with judicial and executive magistracy. Apart from routine policing it is the maintenance of law and order that brings executive magistracy and the police
together. Law refers to the body of indicated or the customary rules which the community recognizes as binding upon itself. Order means prevalence of constituted authority, a law abiding state which implies absence of riots, turbulence, and violence and crimes. S.S.Khera explains six principles of law and order.

"Law and order are inseparable entity, law and order must claim absolute priority; rule of law must prevail; law and order must comprehend the safety of all, without any exception whatsoever; law and order involves the sanction the sanction of force; law and order can prevail only if the principle of civil supremacy prevails....". These six principles tend to extends the damage to the rest. 52

The SDO discharges his functions of an executive magistrate. He holds his court on appointed day/days and venue wherein Additional Public Prosecutor (APP) appears on behalf of state. The SDM conducts inquiries under section 107, 109 and 110 of the code of criminal procedure. Besides, he also takes up cases under section 145, 146 and 147 of the criminal procedure code i.e. where there is a threat to public tranquility. He takes action under section 142 and 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. However, provisions under section 133 of the criminal Cr.p.c are different though it is possible that the state may appear as one of the parties thereto. In addition, some other statutes are there which can be involved by the SDM Most common is registration of vital statistics in time barred cases. Moreover, action under Explosives Acts, and other Regulatory Provisions can also be taken by SDM.

52. Khera S.S., District Administration in India (Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1979), p.70
Local level. The institution of local government has been one of the pillars of Indian administrative system, particularly in the frontier areas. This practice of self-governance is centuries old even in Manipur, much before we give it various academic levels. The Meiteis and the tribes of Manipur, could manage their essential social, economic and political affairs through their own traditional system like singlup on the basis of popular will and consent. But the presently existing form of local self-institution have been established as per the rules and instructions given in the Panchayati Raj Regulation of 1967 with a view to co-ordinate village level administration with the district administration and realization of the principles of self-government and democracy of the Balwantray Mehta Committee in January 1957, recommended a “democratic decentralization” with a three-tier structure of local bodies, namely, the directly elected panchayat at the village level, the Panchayati Samiti at the block level and the Zilla Parishad at the district level.

The local self-institutions in the states of India takes care of the various local problems such as public health, roads, sanitation, conservancy and various other public welfare services. Thus, the local authorities are the field units of district administration to implement district plans and programmes in the local areas and to function as per the order transmitted to them by the district authority. Thus as the lowest level of district administration local authorities play an important role in district administration. Most of the developmental activities of the district administration are given effect by the local authorities.

From the above given analysis of the functioning of the different levels of the district authorities of Manipur, it can be thus concluded that the different level of the district administration are like the different limbs of the same body. In absence of one, the whole body (here the whole administration) gets paralysed. It is not the various levels of district administration but also the various functional departments that are integrated for the purpose of taking quick and prompt action.

From the foregoing analysis the nature and character of district administration in Manipur can be summed up as follows:

To have a good governance of the state, it is essential to have a good and congenial relationship between the Deputy Commissioner and the heads of the functioning departments. So far as the heads of the departments are concerned they are found to be co-operative with the DC. They function as a team under the supervision of the DC in smooth carrying out of his function.

The officials at the district level, as a single body, seems to be in accordance with the same bureaucratic outlook. So whenever and whatever the DC wishes for a thing to be done, they fall in line in support of him, true to the proverbial phrase “Birds of the same feather flock together”.

The DC with his RME and other functions appears to be the most influential authority in the district administration. The SDC’s enjoy their power in his own jurisdiction. The local authorities also enjoy judicial and administrative functions. But in practice it is not so.
The administration of the State of Manipur depends much upon the finance granted by the Central Government. A policy decision involving heavy capital can be taken only with the consent of the Governor who acts as an agent of the Government of India. And moreover since a long time we have no stable government who cares to give some thought to the development policies of the state.

Thus from the above findings, it can be concluded that the district administration by the DCs, SDOs, BDOs and leaders of the local institutions have their own unique place and jurisdiction in the hierarchy of administration. But it also can be said that they cannot work and act independently. Because of this sole reason, district administration cannot be viewed as democratic but perhaps more bureaucratic in form. The district administration in Manipur could be looked upon as a ‘partnership’ in which the bureaucratic elite group might be said to have played the role of ‘Big Brother’ who usually function under the guidelines of the Government of India and operate as a centripetal force.