CHAPTER III

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CHAPTER III

ADMINISTRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

I. Administration and Development - A Positive Relationship

The mid fourties of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of a large number of new sovereign states in Asia, Africa and Latin America. These nations commonly shared colonial legacy and faced same common problems. The crucial and critical problems before these countries pertained to abject poverty and social backwardness. To combat these, many of them formulated and undertook developmental plans and programmes. In the initial stages, development was regarded in a narrower sense of economic terms. This was obvious and natural. But in due course of time, the concept itself was elaborated. Thoughtful discussions and deliberations in the international forums of academic and funding agencies an added emphasis was given to the term 'development' thereby combining it with the principles of social justice. As a result, the concept of development became comprehensive so as to include social and human development to supplement and support the economic development.
In a developing nation administration plays a pivotal role in ensuring balanced development - social, economic and political. Administration in these countries attempts to achieve development in a broader sense through an increase in production, agricultural and manufacturing, advancement of science and technology, optimum utilization of scarce resources, extension of social and welfare services, implementation of institutional and administrative reforms - all complementing to the basic aim of raising the standard of living of the millions of people earlier subjected to acute poverty, unemployment, sickness and illiteracy. In all the developing 'Third World Countries', administration has to play this role as it is the only organized force, and the only organized hope in this country-wise endeavour. It is therefore considered as the heart of all developmental activities. The effective implementation of all developmental programmes in these countries therefore, depends positively on the efficient, impartial and committed administrative machinery.

Administration had to equip itself to perform this new role, had to change its earlier outlook and obtain a new face while tackling problems of development. It is now no more a mere machinery to implement police functions of the state but an agency actively involved in realizing the welfare of the people. This new
perspective has taken 'Public Administration' to a new moral plateau - i.e. 'development administration'. Development administration as a discipline emerged in the beginning of 1960's and acquired growing popularity, salience and relevance in the developing 'Third World'. Administration in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America is now geared to achieve modernization and here development is combined with the principles of social justice.

The primary objective of development administration is to strengthen administrative machinery and help to bring about socio-economic and political development. It also has to carryout development programmes and projects tunned to development objectives of nation building and socio-economic progress. The concept of development administration thus has two major facets:\(^2\)

(i) Development of administration
(ii) Administration of development.

Development of administration is developing administration to perform the new tasks. It is concerned with increasing and improving the capabilities of the system. It aims to improve the mechanism, update skills and mould the actors of development. This involves restructuring the frame, imparting training and educating people engaged in developmental goals. This implies the
use of modern management techniques and ways and thereby establish identity between individual objectives and developmental goals. Saul M. Katz states that, "Administrative capability for development involves the ability to mobilize, allocate and combine the actions that are technically needed to achieve development objectives." It is sharing the product and the process by performing separately identified activities simultaneously and in an approved sequence.

The second facet i.e., 'administration of development' excepts development administration to act as an instrument in the implementation of developmental programmes, projects and policies. This is identified with organizational developments - Government departments, public enterprises, regulatory agencies, public corporations, co-operative institutions etc. to suit to the expected performance (the exercise undertaken by the ARC in India). This covers operating developmental programmes aiming at raising the standards of education, improving public health, increasing national income, conserving national resources, developing communication network system, constructing dams, power plants and undertaking many other developmental tasks of national importance.

Administration of the 'Third World Country' has to respond to this two-fold context. It should develop
itself as well as administer development. It has the crucial responsibility not only to administer development effectively but also to extend benefits of development to its remote areas. It is this that would stabilize the process which every 'Third World Country' desires. It needs a restructured administrative machinery with reoriented administrative personnel to carry out developmental programmes effectively and with commitment. Where a large population belongs to rural areas like in India, the relevance of rural development acquires greater significance.

II. Earlier Indian Experiments in Rural Development

Rural India has passed through various experiments of rural development in the past sixty years. Quite a few centres of rural reconstruction were started in different parts of the country. Some of these centres were started by the governments of the erstwhile princely states, and others were initiated by enlightened individuals and non-governmental organizations including Christian missionaries, voluntary associations and individual constructive workers inspired by Gandhiji's teachings. While looking into the history of rural development experiments in India we can divide it into two parts viz.,
i. Pre-independence experiments
ii. Post-independence experiments

i. Pre-independence Experiment

So far as rural reconstruction is concerned the decade of 1921-30 may be regarded as very fertile decade. This period saw the emergence of Sriniketan, Martandam, Gurgaon, Baroda and the articulation of Gandhian constructive programmes at Sevagram. These experiments in community development were conducted in different parts of the country like in the East at Sriniketan (West Bengal) in the South at Martandam (Kerala) in the West at Kosamba (Gujarat) in the North at Gurgaon (Punjab) and in the central part of India it was at Sevagram (Maharashtra). These experiments took place in the pre-independence period and spread collectively the message of rural development throughout the country.

1. Sriniketan

Rabindra Nath Tagore, the poet-philosopher was behind the Sriniketan experiment. As a humanist he was moved by the pitiable plight of the rural masses. This made him to launch a programme for rural reconstruction in protest against the indifference of his country men towards their
needs. Tagore's association with this experiment legitimized its activities in the society. With the co-operation of Leonard Elmhirst, he established the Sriniketan Institute of Rural Reconstruction in the year 1921. The institute aims "to bring back life in its completeness into the villages, making rural folks self-reliant and self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural traditions of their own country and competent to make an efficient use of modern resources for the improvement of their physical, intellectual and economic conditions".  

These aims were translated into a number of practical activities of rural reconstruction such as organizing health co-operatives, agricultural demonstrations, supply of better seed and manure, training in handicrafts and cottage industries, organizing 'Shiksha Satra' for educating village boys on new lines and producing literature for neo-literates. All this was to educate the people. 'Light through learning' was the moto of these programmes. Tagore wanted the village folk to stand on their own and help themselves. His efforts produced spectacular results in Sriniketan and in its surrounding villages. The villagers took new challenges through collective efforts and helped themselves to raise their standard of living.
2. Martandam

This experiment started in the year 1921 and supported by the missionary zeal was conducted under the leadership of Dr. Spence Hatch. The purpose of the experiment was to bring about a complete upward development toward a more abundant life for rural people, spiritually, mentally, physically, socially and economically. The local Y.M.C.A.s played an important role in carrying the message of rural development to the neighbouring villages. The approach was to provide necessary advice to villagers to enable them to help themselves. Y.M.C.A. members offered voluntary services during their spare time for training local villagers. Martandam became a demonstration centre for improved agricultural and animal husbandry practices, poultry, bee-keeping and similar activities. These efforts at Martandam brought a positive change in the outlook in the people, inculcated in them a desire to improve and created a new spirit of co-operation and self-respect in the rural masses.

3. Gurgaon

The experiment at Gurgaon was mainly a government sponsored programme for rural development. F.L. Brayne,
while working as the Collector of Gurgaon District initiated the idea of rural development in the year 1927. Elaborating his ideas and experiences in a book 'Better Villages', he spoke of rural reconstruction as "nothing more or less than the revival of the old fashioned virtues of hard work, thrift, self-respect, self-control, self-help, mutual help and mutual respect." 

He established schools of Rural Economics and Domestic Sciences to teach dignity of labour and self-help. Wide propaganda was carried through film shows, songs and dramas to spread the message of development in the form of increased farm yield and improved health standards. The 'Village Guide' who was appointed as a multi-purpose worker acted as a link between the villagers and various Government departments. People accepted Brayne's view without any objection as long as he continued in his office. But when he went off the scene, the programme lost its continuity.

4. Baroda

The Maharaja Sayajirao III of Baroda, a foresighted state ruler with progressive vision initiated rural development in his state by founding a centre at Kosamba in Navasari division. The guiding spirit behind this experiment was Shri V.T. Krishnamachari. The scheme of
rural reconstruction was formally commissioned in the year 1932, covering various aspects of rural life and aiming at developing the "will to live better" and a "capacity for self-help and self-reliance".

The programme aimed of achieving overall development through (a) improvement in communication (b) provision of drinking water facilities by digging wells (c) Malaria eradication measures (d) improvement in pastures (e) distribution of improved seeds (f) training in cottage crafts (g) establishment of Panchayats and Co-operatives covering every village and (h) development of village schools as centres for teaching improved agriculture practices and imparting a "will to live better".

5. Sevagram

This was an experiment attempted by Mahatma Gandhi himself. As a social reformer and political agitator, he stood for the removal of social and political evils in the society and fought the battle for socio-economic liberation along with political freedom. His moral appeal enthused people to accept and practice his ideas of rural development, through various programmes at Sevagram. His approach was based on many planks such as (a) village autonomy (Village Swaraj) - decentralisation,
(b) prohibition (c) promotion of village industries, (d) removal of untouchability (e) basic and adult education (f) education in health and hygiene and (h) women uplift. The aim was to bring about social and economic equality and to give equal opportunity of education for all.

He stressed on self-sufficiency of villages particularly in food and clothing. He highlighted the need for imbibing moral values of truth, non-violence, dignity of work, self-restraint, fearlessness as the means to achieve the end of development of the rural people.

Gandhiji left behind a number of organizations; voluntary or supported officially, engaged in constructive work. Incorporation of Khadi and village industry activities in the governmental programme, notion of village self-sufficiency and the faith behind 'Panchayati Raj' and 'Sahakari Samaj Movement' could be traced back to the impact of the Gandhian tradition. The Bhoodan and Gramdan movements led by Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan are also in a sense a continuation of the Gandhian tradition. ¹²

One common feature to note from the above mentioned experiments is that, the individual leadership had been
an important variable in their success or failure stories. It is the leadership, be that of Rabindra Nath Tagore or Dr. Hatch or Mr. Bryane or Mr. V.T. Krishnamachari that motivated people to think in terms of development and national self-determinance. This marked a new phase in the history of rural development in India.

ii. Post-independence Experiments

In the year 1947, India became independent. In tune with the philosophy of national movement, the leadership embarked upon a massive programme of development in all walks of life. Problems of partition made it difficult to allocate adequate resources and pay adequate attention to the challenges of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment. In the initial years of independence, Government therefore was not in a position to take an integrated approach to development. Various socio-economic, political and administrative constrains made it impossible. However learning through various experiments, the government was slowly but definitely moving towards an integrated approach to development. The major experiment since independence could be listed as (1) Nilokheri (2) Etawah and (3) the Community Development Programme.
1. Nilokheri

Shri S.K. Dey was the guiding spirit behind this project. (He subsequently became the Minister for Community Development and Co-operation in Pt. Nehru's Ministry). The township of Nilokheri was designed to rehabilitate the refugees and help them earn a honourable living. For this purpose an 1,100 acres of marshy land was acquired and was developed into a colony in 1948. Subsequently 100 villages around, were integrated with the colony.13

The main objective was to attain self-sufficiency in the essential requirements for the township and the surrounding villages. The colony had its own dairy, poultery, piggery, printing press, engineering workshop, tannery and bone-meal factory. In due course of time, it became not only self-sufficient in its day-to-day needs but was in a position to repay the principal with interest.

Nilokheri became a symbol of progress through self-help and mutual aid. It was an outstanding experiment in the practice of secular socialistic living. But unfortunately the colony developed its own rigid hierarchical structure. Industries began to run into
difficulties. Still it is an eminent centre for training various kinds of developmental personnel and is rightly looked upon as a place of pilgrimage for development workers. 14

2. Etawah Project

After independence, in the year 1948, the first 'pilot project' was launched in an area of 64 villages scattered around Mehewa, located at a distance of about 8 miles from the headquarters of Etawah district. 15 The main architect of the project was Albert Mayer who started the experiment in collaboration with the U.P. State Government. The project emphasised on reproducibility, intensity, developmental co-operation, people's involvement, simultaneous development of appropriate attitudes, careful selection of personnel, local self-reliance and development of village leadership.

The village level worker selected with great care and trained as a multi-purpose worker secured people's participation in activities like agricultural demonstration, soil conservation, improvement in animal husbandry and village sanitation. To enthuse people in these activities, a programme of social education was initiated. Village level coordination, team approach,
pandel programme and regular follow-up method were used to make the programme a success.\textsuperscript{16}

The results of the experiment were encouraging and the government was impressed by its achievements. The success of the programme in bringing about physical benefits and attitudinal changes encouraged the government to extend the coverage of the programme. This made government to launch Community Development Projects modelled on the experience of Etawah, in different parts of the country.

3. \textbf{Community Development Programme}

The Government of India launched on 2nd October 1952, Community Development Programme in 55 pilot projects across the country. The objective was to achieve the fullest development of material and human resources of the area and thereby raise the living standards of the rural community by securing co-operation and involvement of the people and also by encouraging their actual participation in the implementation of the programmes. The programme eventually meant to cover the whole country was the first integrative approach to development at the village community level.
By the end of 1963, 5265 Community Development Blocks were started in different parts of the country. A development block would consist of about 100 villages in an area of 390 to 520 sq.kms. covering a rural population of about seventy to eighty thousand. The block was the lowest administrative unit below the district. The block headquarter provided co-ordination of administrative functions. To implement development programme, a group of specialists, designated as Extension Officers (E.Os) deputed from various government departments were brought under the supervision and leadership of the Block Development Officer (B.D.O). The programmes aimed at achieving an allround development of the block through (a) substantial increase in agricultural production (b) improvement in system of communication (c) improvement in rural health and hygiene and (d) improvement in village education.

The pattern of administration of C.D blocks was more or less the same throughout the country. To co-ordinate and direct Community Development Projects, a Community Projects Administrator was appointed at the national level under the Planning Commission. At the state level, Development Commissioner was in charge with corresponding responsibilities. The Collector or Deputy Commissioner, assisted by a District Planning Committee with its official and non-official components supervised
administration at the district level. At the block level, Block Development Officer with an Advisory Committee, co-ordinated and directed the block administration. At the village level, there was a village Level Worker (V.L.W) a multi-purpose field agent who had the jurisdiction of about 10 villages, covering population of 6000-7000. The B.D.O functioned as a team leader and co-ordinated the work of the E.Os and V.L.Ws.

However this elaborate programme organization did not achieved the desired results. Towards the end of the First Five Year Plan, the programme faced a serious crisis. It failed miserably to enthuse people to take part in developmental activities. The programme tended to be schematic and the pattern was the same throughout the country. But in a country with vast variations, it did not cater to groups with special needs and not to areas which had specific problems.

At this juncture the Government appointed a committee to study the working of the Community Development Programme and National Extension Service projects. It came out with a recommendation of democratization of development process at the grass roots to give a new thrust to rural development. The Committee strongly believed that, only democratic decentralization through wide spread public participation would solve the
problems of rural development. This brought a new phase in the history of rural development and led to the introduction of 'Panchayati Raj'.

III. Democratic Decentralization

'Decentralization' etymologically traced to its Latin roots, means "away from the centre". A number of other terms also of Latin origin such as 'devolution', 'deconcentration', and 'delegation' have related meanings. The two terms 'delegation' and 'decentralization' are usually considered identical covering a similar sense. But there is a shade of difference between them. Delegation of power cannot be equated with decentralization. In delegation, the lower level executive machinery, is in every sense subordinate to the higher level machinery. The final responsibility of the action rests with the higher level authority which delegates power. Decentralization involves two processes those of 'deconcentration' and 'devolution', whereby the government divests itself completely of certain duties and responsibilities and devolves these to some other authority. Decentralization implies delegation of discretionary authority to the field officers and thereby creates a feeling in them that, the central office has confidence in their competence and ability. This would motivate them to do their best to achieve the
targets. Decentralization would bring flexibility, adaptability and maximum popular participation and would help to identify local talents to run the administration smoothly.  

In the age of increasing governmental functions and extending scope of its activities, there has been an imperative need for administrative decentralization. This is to ensure an effective, just and responsive administration. From an administrative point of view, decentralization relieves government at the higher level from much of its procedural work involved in administering services and at the same time, leaves it free to concentrate more on the non-procedural tasks of higher research, proactive supervision and continuing co-ordination of work. From a societal point of view, decentralization takes government closer to its people and makes them aware of the multiple services offered to them by a modern government. In a political context, decentralization makes people conscious of the potentialities of a government and helps to develop in them a desire to influence favourably its distribution aspect. Taking these aspects together, a decentralized pattern of administration makes way for development based on the principles of democracy.

Democracy at the national level cannot succeed without democracy at the grass-roots level'.
Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru rightly pointed out that, democracy is not to be equated merely with the Parliament or State Legislatures. It is something which should excite every person and train him to take his proper place in the whole system. The success of democratic process in the country very much depends on the proper decentralization of power and responsibility to the democratically elected representative bodies of the people. Democracy cannot be strong unless democracy at the villages is strong. Also, we cannot achieve real development in our country unless the panchayats are made responsible for development and the village people are involved in achieving their own development. V.T. Krishnamachari gives a valid observation when he says that, no plan can have any chance of success unless the millions of small farmers in the country accept its objectives, share in its making, regard it as their own and are prepared to make the sacrifices necessary for implementing it.  

The Balwantrai Mehta Committee, after examining the functioning of the Community Development Programmes and National Extension Service Projects, suggested democratic decentralization as a strategy to make developmental efforts successful and lasting. This was to be secured by strengthening the grass-roots democracy in the form of Panchayati Raj and by creating an interlocked system from the "Gram Sabha to the Lok Sabha". In the words of the
Report, "Democracy has to function through certain executive machinery but the democratic Government operating over large areas through its executive machinery, cannot adequately appreciate local needs and circumstances. It is, therefore, necessary that, there should be a devolution of power and a decentralization of machinery and that such power be exercised and such machinery controlled and directed by popular representatives of the local areas."  

The Mehta Study Team, realizing the importance of popular participation, recommended the creation of institutions which were to be statutory in status, elective in composition, comprehensive in duties and functions, equipped with necessary executive machinery, supported with adequate resources and assured of enough autonomy and freedom. The Team suggested the creation of a three-tier structure of decentralization - Village Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and the Zilla Parishad entrusted with the entire function of administering development. It also recommended that the basic unit for planning and organization of the decentralized structure should be located at the block/taluk level. It envisaged directly elected panchayats for a village or a group of villages, an executive body called Panchayat Samiti for a block with directly elected and co-opted members and an advisory body called Zilla Parishad at the district level
constituted indirectly, mainly through ex-officio members from lower tiers, non-officials as well as officials with the Collector as Chairman. On 12th January 1959, the National Development Council endorsed the recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee on Panchayati Raj and suggested that the states should work out the structure suited best to their conditions. This is the genesis of the Panchayati Raj system in India.

Following the broad guidelines suggested by the Mehta Committee, various state governments passed necessary legislations to constitute Panchayati Raj institutions, suited to their own geo-political conditions. The institutional structures evolved through these legislations indicate two models (a) The Rajasthan model and (b) the Maharashtra model.

Rajasthan was the pioneering state to introduce Panchayati Raj institutions as recommended by the Mehta Committee. The Committee advocates a strong middle tier i.e. Panchayat Samiti, which enjoys the functions of planning and implementation. The Rajasthan pattern was close to this structure which was proposed by the Mehta team. This model favoured participatory democracy and tried to develop a community sense.

The Maharashtra pattern departed from this proto-type and structured Panchayati Raj institutions
with Zilla Parishad as a crucial unit and Panchayat Samiti as a non-corporate body working like an area - committee of its Zilla Parishad. The Naik Committee of Maharashtra (1960) felt that, "the district body alone will be capable of providing requisite resources, necessary administrative and technical personnel and equipment required for a properly co-ordinated development of the district." The Maharashtra model favoured development and administrative efficiency.

While critically examining the performance of Panchayati Raj institutions in different states, one can see that, it has passed through different phases, such as, the phase of ascendency during 1959-'64, that of stagnation during 1965-'69 and the phase of decline during 1969-'77. Panchayati Raj started with high enthusiasm and expectations (1959-'64) to bring about rapid change in the semi-stagnant rural society by creating an awareness among the people of their rights and responsibilities. But this enthusiasm did not survive long (1965-'69) and in course of time, saw the withering away of the optimism of its being an agent of rural change. Every one started looking at these institutions with suspicion (1969-77). Even though legislation to introduce Panchayati Raj institutions was framed in these states on one or the other pattern, there was a gross reluctance on the part of most of the states for one reason or the other to devolve adequate functions and powers to these bodies and equip them to efficiently
implement these.

Baring a few studies in Maharashtra and Gujarat, where the system has shown some good results, majority of the studies on panchayati Raj by scholars, do not present an encouraging picture. Panchayati Raj by and large have not been able to achieve their stipulated objectives. 'Economically they are proving a burden on the state-purse' as their own 'extractive capability' is extremely limited. Misutilisation of grants, misappropriation of public money, innumerable credit irregularities, corrupt practices in local bureaucracy and among local politicians, instrumental use of linkages with higher ups in administration and politics for serving individual or groups/caste groups interests are some of the commonly alleged charges against the working of Panchayati Raj institutions. It was no surprise that, during seventies it created an impression of "a God that failed".

The process of decline and stagnation became evident in Panchayati Raj institutions because of the increasing feeling of political alienation and difference felt by weaker sections and backward classes. It was caused by the capture of the Panchayati Raj institutions by the dominant communities. Development programmes for increasing agricultural production became more bureaucratic with hardly any participation by the people. At this juncture in the year 1977, the Janata Government
appointed a 13 member committee headed by Shri Asoka Mehta to enquire into the ailments of Panchayati Raj institutions and prescribe measures to cure the same.

The Asoka Mehta Committee in its report, encompassed all important aspects of the Panchayati Raj and brought out an extensive report with 132 recommendations to revive the system. While diagnosing the ills, affecting the Panchayati Raj institutions, the Committee pointed out that, haphazard programmes, non-performance, rise of vested interests, lack of political will on the part of the Central and State governments, lack of adequate financial resources have directly contributed to its decline. The major thrust of the Report pertained to democratic decentralization and called it as a 'new approach' towards Panchayati Raj. The Committee through its recommendations suggested a model of Government at grass-roots which give a three-tier federal structure instead of the present two-tier. The model as recommended by the Asoka Mehta Committee can be described as follows. 28

The Model

1. Being conscious of the operational realities of Panchayati Raj institutions the committee adopted a flexible approach to the problem and recommended a
two tier model of Panchayati Raj. Keeping in view, the development necessities, the first point of decentralization below the State was suggested should be the district. Apart from being the basic units of devolution, the district level should be treated as the unit of planning.

2. For the second tier, the Committee thought that in order to be viable, the unit has to be bigger than the existing Panchayat. It, therefore, suggested the creation of 'Mandal Panchayats' (which will be the implementing body) consisting of a cluster of villages covering a population of 15,000 to 20,000. The Committee further felt that a Mandal Panchayat would alone be able to ensure a balance between technological requirements and possibilities of popular participation in decision-making.

3. The Committee recommended direct election for both tiers, i.e. Zilla Parishad and Mandal Panchayat with reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population and women (two seats) who get the highest number of votes in Panchayati Raj elections.

4. It suggested to encourage committee system at both the levels.

5. MLAs and MPs should not be 'insiders'. However, the Committee was of the opinion that a Committee of the
whole Zilla parishad may be constituted for planning purposes and MLAs and MPs should also be ex-officio members of this Committee. Therefore, in the proposed system of elections, the directly elected component would be larger than the ex-officio and co-opted elements.

6. The committee categorically favoured the participation of political parties in Panchayati Raj. This was thought to impart distinct orientation toward programmes and to facilitate healthier linkages with the higher level political processes. It would also help in providing constructive outlet to opposition parties at the state level who may chalk out their achievement at the District level. Moreover, direct elections coupled with programme based context would offer greater scope to weaker sections for availing the opportunities offered by the political system.

7. The Committee suggested that the Zilla Parishad would be the first point of decentralization and the basic unit of Panchayati Raj, endowed with a comprehensive range of developmental responsibilities. At the grass-roots level, the Mandal Panchayat would be the hub of developmental activities.

8. With regard to the functions of Panchayati Raj institutions, the Committee felt that development
being a dynamic process, functions cannot remain static. Periodic adjustments would be necessary to suit the changing requirements. As such the Committee recommended that all development functions relating to a district which are now being performed by the State Government should be entrusted to the Zilla Parishad.

9. So far as local level planning is concerned, the Committee suggested that there should be a professionally qualified team at the district level for the preparation of district plans.

10. With a view to ensure social justice, the Committee favoured representation of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes on the basis of their population, and Social Justice Committee with Chairman from the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled tribes. In order to ensure benefits from the development programmes to the weaker sections of the society, it suggested social audit system.

11. An important related recommendations is that all the staff with decentralized functions should be under the Zilla Parishad. The Committee thus visualised a separate development administration having decentralized functions along with a composite Zilla Parishad Secretariat; and

12. Since all functions relating to implementation at the district level are transferred to Zilla Parishad, the
Committee felt that the funds should be transferred to Zilla Parishad automatically. Administrative expenditure on salaries and allowances of staff transferred to Zilla Parishad should be borne by the government.

The committee submitted its final report on August 21, 1978. In the year 1979 a Conference of Chief Ministers was held at New Delhi, to consider important recommendations of the Asoka Mehta Committee. The conference did not accept the concept of 'Mandal Panchayats' and favoured continuance of the existing three-tier system. The consensus was also against political parties officially taking part in panchayat elections. The Chief Ministers further did not consider necessary of a constitutional amendment for the purpose. It was felt that, a model bill should suffice which states could enact with such local modifications as considered necessary.

Three more committees (1) G.V.K.Rao Committee (CAARD) 1985, (2) L.M.Sighvi Committee, 1986 and (3) Thungon Committee, 1988 have gone into the issue of strengthening Panchayati Raj as democratic bodies at the grass-roots. All these committees categorically stated that, democratic decentralization and developmental efforts depend on the effective functioning of the Panchayati Raj.
system. For this they, strongly recommended constitutional provisions to ensure timely and regular elections to these bodies and to secure for them adequate financial resources and thereby end the dependency relations with the state governments.

The main recommendations made by various committees relating to the Panchayati Raj institutions constituted from time to time since 1957 are presented at Appendix C.

IV. The Kerala Panchayat Act (K.P.A) 1960

1. Salient Features of the K.P.A.

Kerala Panchayat Bill was introduced in the State Legislative Assembly on 30th June 1960 and was referred to the select committee on 12th July 1960. The bill seeks to unify, consolidate and so to reform the law relating to panchayat, so as to enable them to function as units of self-government as expected under Article 40 of the Constitution. The select committee after careful study proposed certain changes and placed it before the Legislature for its approval. The bill received the ascent of the Governor on 8th December 1960 and was published in the Kerala Gazette Extraordinary, No 119 dated 9th December 1960 to become the law.

The present Panchayat Act of Kerala is a product of the historical evolution of the Cochin Village Panchayat
Act, 1914, the Travancore Village Panchayat Act, 1925, the Travancore Cochin Panchayat Act, 1950 and the Madras Village Panchayat Act 1950. The K.P.A provides a unified and decentralized system of administration of village affairs through panchayats, by organizing them, as units of local self-government, embracing all important aspects of village life. It extends to the whole State of Kerala except, urban areas which are within the limits of the Cantonments, Municipalities and Municipal Corporations and such other areas as may be notified by the State Government, from time to time.

The present Act is divided into IX Chapters, 151 sections and 5 schedules. The basic principles of the Act are:

1. Panchayat areas will be generally delimited on the basis of complete revenue villages. But in exceptional cases, portions of revenue villages, may also be included in a panchayat area.

2. The panchayat will be constituted by direct elections on the basis of adult franchise.

3. There will be reservation of one seat for Scheduled Castes and also for Scheduled Tribes, where the number of scheduled tribes population is not less than 5 per cent of the total population in a panchayat area and of two seats for women in each panchayat.
The total strength of members of the panchayat may range between 7 to 15 according to population and in accordance with such scale as may be prescribed by the Government, by rules under the Act.

In view of the fact that the responsibility to formulate development scheme is on the panchayats, the term of the office may be five years unless it is extended or reduced by the Government.

ii. Functions of the Village Panchayats of Kerala

Chapter III of the K.P.A 1960 deals with the functions of village panchayats. These functions may be divided into the following three broad categories; (1) obligatory (2) discretionary and (3) delegated functions.

Section 57(1) of the Act, deals with the obligatory functions of village panchayats. Subject to the rules made under this act, it shall be the duty of a panchayat, within the limits of its funds, to make reasonable provision for carrying out the requirements of the panchayat in respect of the following matters:

(a) construction, repairs and maintenance of all public roads in the panchayat area other than roads classified as National Highways and State Highways;
(b) lighting of public roads and public places;
(c) construction of drains and the disposal of drainage water and sullage;
(d) cleansing of streets, removal of rubbish heaps, jungle growth and pickly-pear, the filling of disused wells, insanitary ponds, pools and other improvements of sanitary conditions of the panchayat area;
(e) provision of public latrine and arrangements to cleanse latrines whether public or private;
(f) opening and maintenance of burial and burning grounds;
(g) sinking and repairing of wells, the excavation, repairs and maintenance of ponds or tanks and the construction and maintenance of water - works for the supply of water for washing and bathing and drinking purposes;
(h) preventive and remedial measures connected with any epidemic or with malaria;
(i) control of offensive and dangerous trades;
(j) construction and maintenance of petty irrigation works;
(k) control of cattle pounds;
(l) registration of births and deaths;
(m) maintenance of the village court, established for the panchayat area; by providing accommodation, necessary staff and funds for meeting contingent expenditure.
The discretionary functions assigned to panchayats cover all developmental functions. According to Section 57(2) the panchayat may also within the limit of its funds and wherever possible with Government aid, make reasonable provision for carrying out requirements of the panchayat area in respect of the following matters namely:

(i) Agriculture:

(a) improvement of agriculture and establishment of model agricultural farms;
(b) establishment of granaries;
(c) bringing under cultivation, waste and fallow lands belonging to or vested in the panchayats;
(d) ensuring conservation of natural resources, cultivation of green manure, preparing compost and sale of manure;
(e) establishment and maintenance of nurseries of improved seeds and seedlings;
(f) provision of implements, stores, insecticides etc.;
(g) promotion of co-operative farming;
(h) conducting of crop experiments and launching of crop protection schemes;
(i) encouraging farmers' clubs and other associations of agriculturists;
(j) assistance in the implementation of land reform scheme;
(k) execution of soil conservation schemes;

(ii) Animal Husbandry:

(a) improvement of cattle and cattle breeding and the
general care of livestock;

(b) promotion of dairy farming;

(c) maintenance of stud-bulls and rams;

(d) promotion of poultry farming and bee-keeping.

(iii) Education and culture:

(a) promotion of art and culture including establishment
and maintenance of theatres

(b) noon-feeding of school children;

(c) creation of memorials for celebrities and historical
personages

(iv) Social Welfare:

(a) maternity welfare and the establishment and
maintenance of orphanages and foundlings home;

(b) family welfare;

(c) organising voluntary labour for community works for
development of the village;

(d) destitute homes and beggar homes;

(e) registration of marriages at the instance of the
parties concerned, containing such particulars as
may be prescribed and issuance of certificate
thereof on application after realising the
prescribed fees for such certificate;
(v) Public Health and Sanitation:
(a) preservation and improvement of public health;
(b) reclaiming of unhealthy localities;
(c) providing medical relief;
(d) the inoculation of animals and birds;
(e) establishment and maintenance of dispensaries and payment of subsidies to rural medical practitioners;
(f) maintenance of the purity of fish, meat and other food stuffs,

(vi) Public Works:
(a) construction and maintenance of houses under colonisation and settlement schemes;
(b) construction and maintenance of choultries, travellers' bungalows and rest houses;
(c) construction and maintenance of houses for panchayat staff and other village functionaries;
(d) establishment and maintenance of works for the provision of employment, particularly in times of scarcity;

(vii) General:
(a) preparation of plans for the development of the panchayat area;
(b) promotion, improvement and encouragement of cottage and village industries;
(c) promotion of pisciculture;
(d) promotion of small savings;
(e) preservation of objects of archaeological interest;
(f) promotion of social and moral welfare of the inhabitants of the panchayat area, promotion of social equality, amelioration of the condition of the backward classes, eradication of corruption and discouragement of gambling, untouchability and other anti-social activities;
(g) any other measure or work which is likely to promote the health, safety, education, comfort, convenience or social or economic or cultural well being of the inhabitants of the panchayat area.

Section 58(1) empowers the state government or the Director or Collector to transfer to the panchayats, the management and maintenance of any institution or the execution or maintenance of any work or the exercise of any power or the discharge of any duty at any time as it may deem fit. Thus, the village panchayats of Kerala in addition to their obligatory and discretionary functions have delegatory functions to perform and act as agents of the State Government and implement developmental schemes at the grass-roots level.

According to Section 44 of the K.P.A.1960, every Panchayats is expected to constitute 'Functional Committees' for different subjects like agriculture, sanitation, communication, public health and education.
These would consist of both panchayat members and others who are interested in public welfare and who therefore are nominated by the panchayat. A panchayat may, through resolution supported by not less than one half of its sanctioned strength, appoint a member on the functional committee. A member of the panchayat may serve on more than one functional committee at a time. Any person who is not a member of the panchayat but who may in its opinion, possess special qualifications or knowledge for serving on such a committee is co-opted. But the number of such persons so nominated, shall not exceed one third of the total number of members of such committee. The panchayat President shall by virtue of his office, be the member and the Chairman of all functional committees.

Apart from these committees, panchayats may also constitute 'Ward Committees' with the respective ward member and other local residents nominated by the panchayat. They study and report on the needs of the ward. The nature and scope of these committees shall be as laid down, in its by-laws by each panchayat from time to time. To implement developmental schemes such as N.R.E.P., R.L.E.G.P and J.R.Y., local 'Beneficiary Committees' are also constituted under the direct supervision of the respective ward member.
iii) **Regulatory Role**

Sections 48 to 56 of the K.P.A, 1960 deal with aspects of control and supervision over village panchayats. Section 48 empowers the Panchayat Director to supervise and exercise necessary control over the panchayat administration in the state. He is assisted by 4 Deputy Directors of Panchayat. The Director or Deputy Director or any Officer or person whom the Government may empower, can direct panchayats to make provisions for the execution of public work or amenity or service of the description referred in section 57 of K.P.A. 1960. They can call for any record, register or document which is in the possession of panchayat executive authority. According to Section 49, the Director may, by order in writing can suspend or cancel any resolution passed or licenses or permits granted by a panchayat.

Section 52 empowers the Director to take action against default committed by a panchayat or its executive authority in performing any duty imposed under this or any other Act of the State. The Director may, by order in writing, fix a period for the performance of such a duty. If it is not performed within the stipulated period, he can appoint another officer to perform it, and may direct that the expenses incurred for performing such a function
shall be paid by the officer, having the custody of the panchayat fund.

Section 53 states that, the State Government, by notification in the Gazette and with effect from a date to be specified therein, may remove any President or Vice-President who in their opinion, willfully fails or refuses to carry out his duties under the provisions of this Act or any rule, bye-laws, regulation or lawful order issued thereunder or abuses the power vested in him by law. The Government can constitute an enquiry into the matter, by such appropriate officer as it deems fit. The Panchayat President or Vice-President, as the case may be, is given an opportunity for explanation. The notification issued shall contain a statement of the reason for the action taken. Any person removed from the office of President or Vice-President shall not be eligible for election to either of the said offices, until the date on which notice of the next ordinary election to the panchayat is published in the prescribed manner.

Section 54 of the Act, deals with the provisions of motion of no-confidence in President or Vice-President. Subject to the provisions of this section, a motion expressing no-confidence in the President or the Vice-President shall be signed by such number of members
as shall constitute, not less than one half of the total strength of the panchayat. The copy of the motion which is proposed to be made shall be delivered in person by any two members of the panchayat, signing the notice in person, to the Deputy Director. Any Officer of the Government (not below the rank of District Panchayat Officer) authorised by the Deputy Director in his behalf, shall convene a meeting of the panchayat for the consideration of the motion. It would be held at the office of the panchayat, at a time appointed by him, but shall not be later than thirty days from the date, on which the notice is delivered to the Deputy Director. The person presiding shall not speak on the merits of the motion nor shall he be entitled to vote thereon. If the motion is carried with the support of not less than three fifths of the total strength of the panchayat, and if the President or the Vice-President, as the case may be, does not resign his office within two days after the passing of the motion, the Director shall, by notification in the Gazette, remove him from the office.

Section 55 gives the state Government, power to dissolve or supersede Village panchayats. If a panchayat is persistently making default in performing the duties, imposed on it by law or is exceeding or abusing its powers, the Government may by notification in the Gazette direct, that the panchayat shall be dissolved and
reconstituted on such prescribed date as the Government may fix in that behalf, or the Government may if they think necessary, supersede the panchayat for a period, not exceeding six months from the specified date, (which period may be extended from time to time by such period, not exceeding six months at a time, however so that, the aggregate period of supersession shall not exceed 3 years) and reconstitute the same on the termination of the period of supersession.

During the interval, if any, between the dissolution and the reconstitution of a panchayat or during the period of its supersession, as the case may be, all or any of the functions, powers and duties of the panchayat and its President may be exercised and discharged, as far as may be and to such extent, as the Government may determine

(a) by an Administrative Committee and the President thereof respectively, or
(b) by a Special Officer

The Administrative Committee and its President, or the Special Officers are appointed by the Government by notification in the Gazette.

Financial control imposed on village panchayats is laid down in section 78 of the Act. It says that, the executive authority shall in each year, frame in the
prescribed form and the manner, a budget showing the probable receipts and expenditure during the following year and forward it not later than the prescribed date, to the Deputy Director for scrutiny. If the Deputy Director is satisfied, that, adequate provision has not been made in the budget, he shall have the power to modify it, in such manner as may be necessary, to secure such provisions and return it to the executive authority with his observations, regarding the modifications to be made therein. The panchayat shall consider these observations and pass the budget with such modifications as the panchayat may deem fit. If, in the course of a year, a panchayat finds it necessary to modify the estimates shown in the budget, on different services undertaken by it, the executive authority shall frame a supplementary or revised budget and forward it to the Deputy Director and on its return from the Deputy Director, place it before the panchayat for sanction.

Other than the provisions mentioned above, section 46 of the Act, says that, every panchayat shall forward to the Director a report on its administration for each year as soon as may be, after the close of such year but not later than the prescribed date, in such form and with such details as may be prescribed in the Act. The report shall be prepared by the executive authority and the panchayat shall consider it and forward the same to the
Director with its resolution thereon, if any. The Director should submit to the Government a general report on the administration of panchayats in the state during the year.

Statutes formalize the relationships between panchayat bodies and higher level governmental bodies. Provisions reflect aspirations and earlier experiences. It is the leadership at the helm of affairs that make this relationship live and dynamic as it translates these aspirations in the light of their interpretation of the earlier experiences.

V. Recent Developments in the Panchayati Raj System of Kerala

Till recently, Kerala was having only the lower tier in the Panchayati Raj structure, viz. the village panchayat. In the year 1991 Panchayati Raj system in Kerala entered the new era, with the revival of District Councils, through the implementation of the District Administration Act, 1980. Elections to these bodies were held on 29th January 1991 and the District Councils came into existence on February 5, 1991 in all the 14 districts of the state. While looking back, into the history of Kerala Panchayati Raj system, one can see since 1957 quite a few abortive attempts made to introduce democratic institutions at the district level.
The State Administrative Reforms Commission, 1957, under the Chairmanship of Shri E.M.S.Namboothiripad (Chief Minister of the first Communist Ministry of Kerala 1957-59) suggested a two-tier structure of panchayat administration at the village and district levels. To this effect, two separate bills viz. the Kerala Panchayat Bill, 1958, and the Kerala District Samiti Bill, 1959, were introduced in the state legislature in 1958 and 1959 respectively. But in the political upheavals, the centre dismissed the Ministry and the bills could not become a law. Again in the year 1964 Shri R.Shankar piloted a similar bill to introduce district level units - the Zilla Parishads. This attempt too, could not see through due to the fall of the Ministry. Attempts in 1969 and 1970 followed the similar fate. It was only in 1979, under the Chief Ministership of Shri P.K.Vasudevan Nair the District Administration Bill got through the legislative formalities and with the consent of the President, became law on May 18, 1980. Plagued with political intrigues, the bill however remained in the cold storage, nearly for a decade.

In the 1987 State Assembly elections, the L.D.F. stormed the polls with the election promise to implement the District Administration Act, 1980. The L.D.F. felt that, the earlier Act needed certain amendments in the changed political situations. The Government therefore
appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of Shri V. Ramchandran, retired Chief Secretary, to study the issue. The report of the Committee was placed before the legislature and finally approved in the year 1990. Accordingly, 137 items, under 19 headings, in the state list were handed over to the District Council. The district council now enjoys the power to make decisions regarding land revenue, Co-operation, Cottage Industries, Soil Conservation, Public Health, Education, Welfare of Weaker Sections, Animal Husbandry, Mobilization of Local Resources, Rural Housing and the host of allied functions. The district councils would take decisions and implement their policies but would avoid any clash with the decisions and policies of the state government operating in the same field.

A few salient features of the District Administration Act can be listed as follows:

(a) There is a District Council for each revenue district.

(b) The membership of the district council is limited to a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 40. The members are elected on the basis of universal adult franchise, for a period of 5 years, from a division (constituency) representing 50,000 electorates.

(c) The Act makes special provisions, for 30 per cent
reservation of seats for women. The reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes is either 10 per cent of the total seats, of the district councils or in proportion to their numerical strength, which ever is higher. A district, having a tribal population of more than 10,000 will have one seat reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. The following table shows the districtwise distribution of reservation seats for Women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes.

Table 3.1: Reservation of Seats in the District Councils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Total seats</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes Reservat- ion</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribes reservat- ion</th>
<th>Women Reservat- ion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trivandrum</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilon</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathanamthitha</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alleppey</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kottayam</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idukki</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trissur</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palghat</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malapuram</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kozhikode</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wynad</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

contd..
Kannore 39 4 1 12
Kasarkode 20 2 1 6
Total 474 55 7 144


(d) The President and Vice-President of the district Councils are elected from among the elected Members themselves.

(e) The District Collector is both, the ex-officio Secretary and the Chief Executive Officer of the district council and looks after the day-to-day administration.

(f) The M.L.As and M.Ps, whose constituencies fall within the geographic boundaries of the district, are ex-officio members of the respective district council.

(g) For efficient functioning of the district councils, six standing committees are constituted. Membership of each of the standing committees is limited to seven. The Chairman and six other members are elected from amongst the members of the district council, on the basis of proportional representation and by single transferable vote. The Vice-President of the district council, is ex-officio, the Chairman.
of the general standing committee. The Chairman of a standing committee is not allowed to continue as a member or a Chairman of any other standing committee. The following table shows the classification of the standing committees and the subject allotted to each of them.

Table 3.2: Classification of Standing Committees of the District Councils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Standing Committee</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Standing Committee</td>
<td>Establishment, law, local self-government, revenue, miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Standing Committee</td>
<td>Industry, agriculture, animal husbandry, inland fishing, diary development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Standing Committee</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare Standing</td>
<td>Harijan Welfare, health services, social welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works Standing Committee</td>
<td>Irrigation, engineering, roads, bridges, buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Standing Committee</td>
<td>Education, Culture, Sports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Public Relations, 'District Administration Act: A New Path for Decentralization of Decisions', ibid, p.6

In the 1991 State Assembly election U.D.F came to power, but majority of district councils were controled by the L.D.F. In this political context it was natural for the U.D.F. government not to push further and
implement the provisions of District Administration Act. The result is that, we have district councils which are immaculated, starved and ineffective.

References

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4. Ibid p.p 8-10
7. Sriniketan Bulletin, No.11, 1946, Quoted in ibid.
12. S.N. Mishra, op. cit. p. 26
13. Ibid p. 29
14. Ibid pp. 30, 31
16. S.N. Mishra op. cit. p. 31
17. Krit N. Shelat op. cit. p. 8
22. V.Y. Krishnamachari, 'Address to the Six Development Commissioners Conference', cited in Abida Samiuddin, op. cit. p. 20
23. S.K. Dey, 'From Local Government to the Centre; cited in Abida Samiuddin, ibid, p. 21
25. S.N. Mishra, 'New Thrust in Democratic Decentralization', Theme paper presented in the Thirty-First Annual Conference of Members of the
26. Naik Committee Report, as quoted in V.G.Nandedkar, op.cit, p.47