CHAPTER V

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: DEVELOPMENTAL FUNCTIONS
Development administration has a distinctive identity in relation to the developing countries which strive to attain self-generated economic growth. Besides serving, the traditional foundational functions of the state, it has to perform entrepreneurial duties in the realm of production of goods and services and is simultaneously engaged in protective production and distributive roles. In recent years, the instrumental role of administration as an agent of institutional, social and economic change and as a catalyst of scientific and technical advance, has assumed greater importance over the years. 

The term development means a process of natural evolution and growth. It connotes, in brief, some kind of movement in a positive direction, from the one state of being to another. Thus in the widest sense, the term development includes:

1. Economic Development including agriculture and other activities adopted to building up of beneficial assets.
2. Socio-economic Programmes including measures of social security.

3. Social development programmes like health, education, housing, etc.

4. Provision of civic amenities like street lighting, recreation centres.

5. Provision of cultural activities like sports and other entertainments.

6. Uplift of backward classes and sections, etc.

The development administration is oriented to bring the full potential of the country into being and is always concerned with the full exploitation of all the components of administration for public service and the welfare of the people. Thus the word development generally indicates those bodies of thought that centre around growth and directional change.

During the later part of the Pakistani days and after the emergence of Bangladesh the concept of community development has added a new dimension to the development functions of District Administration.

Community development has been defined "as a process of social action in which the people of a community organise


themselves for planning and action, define their common and individual needs and problems, make groups and individual plans to meet their needs and solve their problems, execute these plans with the maximum reliance upon community resources and supplement these resources when necessary, with services and material from governmental and non-governmental agencies outside the community."5

During the early stage of British colonial rule the primary concern of the administration was collection of revenue and maintenance of law and order. The Deputy Commissioners individually took initiative for rural development. But gradually it became part of their official duties. Government's involvement in rural development began in 1935 with a grant of Rupees one crore from the central government to match the needs of the poverty stricken rural people of Bengal. The central government's policy outline for the programme were:

(a) Improvement of the rural water supply.
(b) Provisions of playing grounds for villages and village schools.
(c) Improvement of village communications and waterways.
(d) Improvement of rural sanitation.

To meet this the government of Bengal established a new department named 'Rural Reconstruction Department' in 1938. The objectives of the newly created department were to give the masses a new consciousness, to awake their sense of self-respect, self-reliance and self-help, to educate and organise them in active cooperation and voluntary joint efforts, to create the sense of good citizenship, to build better homes, better villages and in general, to promote the physical, social, moral and material advancement of the rural communities as a whole.

**Legal Government and Rural Development**

Local self governments created in the second half of the 19th century under the guidance and supervision of the D.C. were entrusted with tasks related with rural development. In those days, there were two categories of local self government in Bengal. One was meant for the rural areas, the other for the urban areas. The local self government for the rural areas, except the District of Sylhet, had two tiers. The lower tier was the Union Board. The upper tier was the District Board. In the district of Sylhet where there was no Union Board and
District Board, the Local Board still existed. The urban areas had one tier local self-government known as the Municipal Committee.6

A Union Board generally performed the following functions:

Protective Functions: These were the compulsory functions of the Board. These were mainly related to the protection of the villagers from unlawful and dangerous activities, such as murder, robbery, theft and similar other offences. The Board used to perform them with the help of Chawkiders and Defaders.

Welfare Functions: These were organised under the head of 'Optional functions'. These included provision and maintenance of 'Kacha roads' linking the villages of one part of the union to those of the other, construction of bridges, provision and maintenance of schools, dispensaries and tube-wells etc. The Board could also undertake and carry out any other local work of public utility.

Regulatory Functions: These included functions like the registration of birth and death, control on erection of buildings, collection and supplying any information desired by the D.C.,

and prevention of public nuisance etc. Besides these the Board had also certain judicial functions. It tried petty criminal and civil cases like theft, mischief, trespass and simple hurt etc.

The District Board was entrusted with several functions. These were classified under the following heads: (a) Communication, (b) Health and Sanitation, (c) Water Supply, (d) Education and Miscellaneous functions.

The powers exercised by the Deputy Commissioner in connection with a local self-governing body was indirect and may be broadly treated as financial, administrative and emergency. A copy of the budget of a local self-governing body was to be submitted to him. His previous sanction was required for fixing the date of payment of the tax and its instalment. An appeal against the assessment or the levy of any kind, or the refusal to refund any tax, was to be made to him or some other officer empowered by the government for this purpose. Sanction of the D.C. was required to levy fees on persons attending fairs managed by municipalities. In administrative affairs, he could, by order in writing, suspend the execution of any order or resolution of a Municipal Committee or a District Board or prohibit any act which was about to be done if in his opinion that order or
resolution or act was likely to lead to a breach of peace or to cause injury or annoyance to the public, or to any class or body of persons. He could enter, inspect and survey or cause to be entered, inspected and surveyed, any immovable property of a local self-governing body, or call for inspection any book or document of that body, or order it to furnish such statements, accounts, reports and copies of documents, relating to its proceedings. Further, a local self-governing body had to correspond with the government only through him. In case of emergency and mismanagement he could, on behalf of the government, dissolve a local self-governing body.7

V-AID Programme

But even outside the sphere of these local bodies activities the concept of rural welfare and development began to gain importance and official attention. With the partition of India in 1947, improvement of the social and economic condition of the country became a primary goal of the government. To achieve this goal several steps were taken, foremost among those being the establishment in July 1965 of the Village Agriculture and Industrial Development Programme (V-AID).8 In fact V-AID programme


was a lineal descendant of the former Department of Rural Reconstruction of the pre-partition days. V-AID's activities were primarily carried out by a group of Village Level Workers, who were called "the spearheads" of the programme. Within each village, a 'Village Council of Elders' was to be created. The programme was back-stopped by several training institutes, and financed by central, provincial, and foreign governments. 9

The primary aim of the V-AID programme was to "foster effective citizen participation in the rural self-help projects" in the fields of agriculture, health and sanitation, adult literacy, primary education, cottage industry, minor irrigation and reclamation, secondary road construction, co-operative societies, village social and recreational activities etc. 10

At the district level for the purpose of V-AID administration each district was divided into a number of "Development Areas". Both at the district and "Development Area" levels V-AID Advisory Committees were formed. The main function of these committees was to serve as a co-ordinating body and to review the V-AID work periodically. The D.C. was made responsible for the successful implementation of the Village-AID Programme within the district. The First Five Year Plan (FFYP) of Pakistan also

9. Ibid., p. 105.
### Table 6.1

**Composition of District V-AID Advisory Committee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Role Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner (D.C.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Senior Development Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>All S.D.O.s, District Level heads of nation building departments, all V-AID Development Officers and two Village Council members per “development area”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 

stated that the primary concern of the D.C. would be the implementation of V-AID Programmes. His main responsibility was the supervision of the V-AID Programmes and to ensure proper coordination between it and the technical departments. In the Sub-division the S.D.O. also played the same role.

But the V-AID Programme failed to produce the desired result and in 1961 the programme was terminated. V-AID Programme was heavily dependent on American aid. A sum of US $37 million was invested for this programme.

11. *First Five Year Plan of Pakistan*, p. 108.
Table 6.2
Composition of V-AID Development Area Advisory Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner (D.C.) or Sub-divisional Officer (S.D.O.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>V-AID Development Officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Representative of nation building departments operating below the district level. V-AID Supervisors and Workers, Chairman of all Village Councils, and the representatives of the interested local groups who were usually selected by the Development Officer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


inspite of these, the V-AID Programme failed to produce the desired result. A major defect of the programme was that the local bodies were kept separated from the V-AID organisation with the result that two parallel institutions, intended for virtually the same purpose, were operating side by side. This situation often led to rivalry, jealousy and unnecessary competition between the two parallel institutions. Moreover, the lack of cooperation from the specialist services was all the more acute as both the traditional district administration headed by the D.C. and the local government system were not involved in the programme to the extent that was desirable.
But this can not categorically be said that the V-AID Programme failed only for the above stated reasons. There were other reasons which underline the importance of administrative need for co-ordination. The proponents of V-AID Programme most of whom were American advisors overlooked the importance of the 'Public Administration' aspects of community development programme. They took for granted the spirit of community development among the people. As various U.N. Reports have shown, community development programmes have been most successful in countries having administrative districts with a single functionary to co-ordinate. The Reports cited the case of India where the community development programme have been most successful, there the leadership was left to the D.C.  

The lesson that emerged from the V-AID experience was that, for any rural development programme to be successful, there must be:

(a) Continuing political commitment;
(b) Active involvement of the national administrative system;
(c) Participation by the villagers.  

Thus, the failure of V-AID Programme was an eye opener for all those who wished to work out a viable rural development programme. The major lesson learned was that any rural development programme to be successful must be based on an adequate understanding of the administrative and popular institutions in the villages.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Rural Works Programme (R.W.P.)}

The second phase of rural development began with the introduction of the works programme. The Rural Works Programme (R.W.P.) had its origin in the negotiations over the Public Law 480 (PL-480) programme in August, 1961 between the Government of Pakistan and the Government of the United States. The programme as it emerged was designed to supply U.S. surplus agricultural commodities such as wheat, butter, dried milk, edible oils, animal fats etc. The commodities were to be paid for in Pakistani rupees, which would accumulate in counterpart funds in Pakistan to be disbursed by the U.S. Government in agreement with the local authorities. The bulk of the counterpart funds were to be earmarked to make good the rupees component of U.S. aided projects, but a balance was to be retained for the local expenses of the U.S. embassy and its agencies.\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Report of the Committee for administrative Re-organisation/ Reform, 1962.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Rahman Sobhan, Basic Democracies, Works Programmes and Rural Development in East Pakistan, Dhaka, Bureau of Economic Research, University of Dhaka, 1968, p. 105.
\end{itemize}
The original objective behind the programme was to inject surplus commodities into West Pakistan to mop up the purchasing power generated by the rupee component of the 'Indus Replacement Works', thereby reducing the inevitable increase in inflationary pressure generated by the project. There had, however, been considerable criticism of the programme in East Pakistan because it had seriously distorted the balance of resources between West and East Pakistan. This had already been felt to be inequitable within the main body of the Second Five Year Plan (SFYP). The inclusion of another Rs. 600 crores for the Indus programme, outside the plans was felt to aggravate the already very serious economic imbalance which existed between East and West Pakistan and which had been perpetuated by the SFYP. In response to this clamour and out of sensitivity to the political consequences of a further injection of aid under the PL-480 programme into West Pakistan, the 'Harvard Advisory Group' attached to the Pakistan Planning Commission, came up with the idea of a Rural Public Works Programme for East Pakistan, to be financed outside the plan. In this respect it was clearly meant as a sop, however inadequate, to East Pakistan, to match the Indus Works.

The idea, as conceived by the Harvard Advisory Group, was to use the counterpart funds to finance the programme. In order to mop up the inflationary pressure generated by this injection of cash into the rural economy, a compensatory inflow
of surplus commodities or basic wage goods was to be imported into East Pakistan. In this way the Works Programme came to be an American conceived and financed programme. It was decided that the R.W.P. would be based on the assumption that the local people had the knowledge, the competence and the integrity to undertake development work and that the civil administration would be able to organise the projects without contractors and with some advice from engineers.

The decision was taken that the Comilla Kotwali Thana with an area of 100 sq. miles would be used as the testing ground. The programme was a success in Kotwali Thana, Comilla, both in terms of economic and improvement of rural condition. The programme was expanded on a country wide basis in 1963-64. The amount allotted for the R.W.P. in 1963-64 was Rs. 20 crores. During the next financial year the allocation was further increased to Rs. 25 crores. Each thana was converted into a 'Development Circle'. An attempt was thus made to give them, traditionally,

a police outpost, a new image and a new meaning. The D.Cs. were given overall responsibility of successful execution of programmes in their respective districts.

From past experiences it has been observed that politics plays an important part in shaping and influencing the structure and role of administrative systems. Camilla experiment could not also escape this influence. Under this influence, the rural development programme was built around the system of local government consisting of District Council, Thana council and Union council with elected and official members. Except for Union council, District and Thana Councils were to be headed by the Deputy Commissioner and Sub-Divisional Officers respectively. Even this was not the main argument for the system. The main argument was the concept of developing democracy from the grass root under what was known as the Basic Democracies system.

Basic Democracies (B.D.)

The system of Basic Democracies covered both the rural and urban areas. It was a four tier system. Under the system the whole of Pakistan was divided into 80,000 electoral units.

The electors of all electoral units in both the provinces constituted the electoral college of Pakistan and were known as members of the 'Electional College of Pakistan.' The members of the electoral college, after having served the purely political function of electing the President and the Members of the National and Provincial Assemblies, were converted into members of the Union Councils in the rural areas and of Town and Union Committees in the urban areas. They were not directly elected as members of the Union Councils. Functions relating to matters of local government were then by law conferred on the members of the 'Electional College.'

The lowest tier of the Basic Democracies System was the Union Council (U.C.). The Union Council was entrusted with a wide range of functions. They may be grouped in the following heads: (a) Civil Functions; (b) Police and Defence Functions; (c) Revenue and General Administrative Functions; (d) Functions relating to Agricultural Development; (e) Functions relating to National Reconstruction; (f) Judicial, and (g) Political Functions. The administrative affairs of the Union Councils

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were controlled by the next higher tier i.e. the Thana Council. The Thana Council acted as a territorial committee of the District Council. Its main function was to co-ordinate the activities of all Union Councils and Town Committees in the thana. All development schemes prepared by the Union Councils and Town Committees were co-ordinated and supervised by the Thana Council. All grants, financial and technical assistance required by the Union Councils were channelised through Thana Councils. In performance of their functions, the Thana Councils were responsible to the District Council concerned, and acted in accordance with such direction as the District Council from time to time gave. The S.D.O. acted as the chairman of the Thana Council. The executive powers of the Council were vested with him. In his absence C.O. (Dev.) acted as the chairman.

The District Council was one of the most important tiers of the B.D. system. The District Council was consisted of both official and elected members. The elected members were elected by the chairman of the Union Councils and Town Committees within the district except in the case of the District of Chittagong Hill Tracts. In this district the elected members were elected...
by the members and not by the chairman of the Union Councils and Town Committees. 35

The Deputy Commissioner was the ex-officio member as well as the chairman of the District Council. All executive powers were vested in him. He was also responsible for the day to day administration of the District Council. 36 There was also provision for a Vice-Chairman. He was elected amongst its elected members. There was also provision for a Secretary of the District Council under the B.D. system. He was usually a member of the East Pakistan Civil Service. He was appointed and paid by the government. The District Council had no control over the appointment and pay scale of the Secretary.

Under the B.D. system, the functions of the District Council were classified under three headings:

(1) Compulsory Functions:
   (a) Environmental, (b) Public health, (c) Educational and cultural, (d) Agricultural, Industrial and Community Development and (e) Social and Personal.

(2) Optional Functions:

35. The B.D. Order, Art 18 (1) and (2).
36. Ibid., Rule 8 (1)
(3) Co-ordinative Functions:

A District Council was required to co-ordinate the activities of all local councils and municipal bodies and cantonment boards within the district. Among other things a District Council had to (a) formulate and recommend to the Divisional Council and other authorities, development schemes of importance to the district, (b) reviewed the progress in various branches of administration, and (c) considered local problems of importance in all branches of administration and made suggestions for development, improvement and general advancement. 37

A Divisional Council consisted of official members and elected members. The Divisional Commissioner was the ex-officio chairman of the council. He presided over the meetings of the council and was responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Divisional Council. The Divisional Council was primarily a co-ordinating body. A Divisional Council was required to co-ordinate the activities of all local councils and municipal bodies and cantonment boards within the division. 38 It formulated and recommended to the government development schemes of importance to the division. It also reviewed generally the performances

37. The B.D. Order, Art. 84.
38. Ibid., Art. 31.
### DIVISIONAL COUNCIL - 4

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<th>Position</th>
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<td>Official</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-Chairman</td>
<td>Elected by the members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMBERS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official</td>
<td>Elected</td>
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### THANA COUNCIL - 396

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<tr>
<td>Vice-Chairman</td>
<td>Circle Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Official</td>
<td>Elected Chairman of Union Councils and Town Committees</td>
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### UNION COUNCIL - 4032

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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>All Elected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Source:** A.H.M. Shawkat Ali, 'FIELD ADMINISTRATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH', Centre for Social Studies, Dhaka, 1982, p. 82

**FIG. 5.1** B.D. SYSTEM IN EAST PAKISTAN

1962
of the various branches of administration in the division.

**Deputy Commissioner's Relation with the Local Government Bodies and His Role in Rural Development**

The changes made in the system of local government brought great changes in the role of the Deputy Commissioner in relation to the local bodies. In the B.D. system he took a direct part and figured very prominently. He acted as the ex-officio chairman of the District Council. He had the power to appoint the non-elective members of the Thana Councils with the prior approval of the Divisional Commissioner. The non-elective members of the District Council were also appointed on his recommendation. Again, it was he who could remove the appointed members. He had full powers to conduct the election of Chairmen of Union Councils. He also appointed the Secretary of a Union Council. Every local council had to prepare and sanction the budget before the commencement of each financial year and submitted a copy of it to the D.C. Within thirty days of the receipt of the copy of a budget he could by order, modify it and the budget, so modified deemed to be the sanctioned budget of the local council. If any local council failed to prepare the budget before the commencement of the financial year the D.C. could prepare the same and it was treated as the sanctioned budget of the local council. As the controlling authority
he could quash the proceedings, suspend the execution of any resolution passed or orders made by a local council or prohibit the doing of anything proposed to be done and could require a local council to take such action as may be specified. He also heard appeals from orders passed by local councils or their chairmen. And above all the law provided the D.C. with the authority that if, after enquiry, it was found that a local council was not functioning properly, he could suspend it for a particular period. He was also responsible for the general supervision of the functions of the local councils.39

It has been earlier stated that the rural development programmes during the Pakistani days were built around the system of local government introduced by the Basic Democracies Order. The Deputy Commissioner as the head of the district and as the chairman of the District Council played a very vital and important role in organising and encouraging the development works. He was the prime supervisor and organiser of the entire Rural Works Programme. In the first year preparation and approval of all schemes were within his sole competence. Later, however, approval of schemes prepared by District Councils and Municipalities were accorded by the Basic Democracies and Local Government Department of the provincial government. Funds for the Rural Works Programme were allotted to district on the basis of population and then they were sub-divided on the same basis.

Allocations, however, were made separately to various tiers of local councils and even for specific projects. Project preparation and implementation under the R.W.P. were done through a unique process. A Union Council considered the ideas of the members who had prior discussions on them with the members of their constituencies which were called Wards. From some of these ideas Union Plans for a period of 3 to 5 years were prepared. The rest of the ideas were passed on to the Thana and District Councils whose members also brought forth their own ideas. Annual programme was drawn up on the basis of the long-term plan and priorities were indicated for implementation of works. The Thana and District Councils also prepared their schemes in the similar manner. The schemes prepared by the Union Councils were approved by the Thana Councils, and those prepared by the Thana Councils were approved by the District Councils. The implementation of the approved programme was taken up by Project Committees consisted of Union Councillors and other local leaders. Funds allocated to the Union and Thana Councils were drawn from the Sub-divisional Officers by the Project Committees through the Circle Officer. The District Councils and Municipalities also operated through the Project Committees and in some cases the District Councils made over the funds to the S.D.Os. Generally, however, the District Councils and Municipalities administered their own funds. The controlling authority of the Works Programme funds was the Deputy Commissioner and his
Sub-divisional Officer. Funds of the Thana and Union Councils and Union Committees were controlled by the S.D.O., and while those of District Councils and Municipalities, by the D.C. 40

Local government institutions established under the Basic Democracies Order became highly unpopular in the then East Pakistan. So immediately after the liberation the government by an executive order abolished the old system and declared the introduction of the Union Panchayat system throughout the country. 41 The dissolution order was amended in February, 1972 and made provision for the constitution of Thana Development Committee (T.D.C.) to be nominated by the Deputy Commissioner. At union level, a Union Panchayat was to be run by a committee to be appointed by the S.D.O., while the Zilla Board was to be run by an administrator to be appointed by the government. Later the D.C. and the S.D.O. were appointed as the administrators of the Zilla Board and Thana Development Committee respectively. Provision was also made for inducting people's representatives in these committees and boards. Though the government was then politically and constitutionally committed to provide for a framework of local government and local administration to be run

by elected representatives of the people at all levels. But the government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman did nothing to establish elected local government bodies at all levels, other than at the Union Level. The Union Parishad was renamed as the Union Parishad. From the analysis of the provisions of the constitution of the Union Parishad, it appears that there was no basic change in the character of the Union Parishad. The only remarkable change was that the chairman was to be no longer elected by the members of the Parishad. He was to be directly elected by voters of the entire Union. With regard to functions there was no basic change. Special emphasis was, however, given to rehabilitation and reconstruction at the rural areas. This was done in accordance with the circumstances prevailing after liberation was. Thus the functions and responsibilities of the Union Parishad during this period were the same as they were under the Basic Democracies.

The Zilla Parishad during this period, as has been stated, was not a representative body. It was run by administrator with other officials. Thus in the absence of elected local government bodies at district and thana level, the traditional district administrative set up remained the only instrument for carrying out the principal function of providing goods and services to the people as well as for guidance and supervision of developmental projects. The Circle Officer (Development) prepared the Union

42. Constitution of Bangladesh, Art. 59.
Development Plan and Thana Development Plan. The respective Administrators prepared development plans for Zilla Board and Paurashava (Municipality) and submitted them for approval to the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives.43

After the change of government in 1975, a new local government ordinance was promulgated. It provided for elected local councils at all levels except thana. In accordance with the provisions of the ordinance, the following local parishads were to be constituted: (a) Union Parishad for a Union; (b) Thana Parishad for a thana; and (c) Zilla Parishad for a district.44

Union Parishad (U.P.)

Each union was divided into three wards and each ward was to elect three members. Besides these members a chairman was to be directly elected by the entire population of the union. The Parishad was also to have two women members to be nominated by the S.D.O. concerned.

The changes in the composition of the U.P. from the earlier U.P. were distinct but little. The ordinance did not make any provision for the post of vice-chairmen. The provision for nominating two women members to the U.P. was definitely a new feature of the composition of this body.

The U.P.s. had subject to rules, and direction given by the government the following functions: (a) Civic functions, (b) Police and defence functions, (c) Revenue and general administrative functions, (d) Judicial functions and Development functions.45

**Thana Parishad (T.P.)**

The Thana Parishad was to consist of representative and official members.46 The Chairman of the T.P.s. within a thana were to be the representative members while the S.D.O., C.O. and other officers specified by the government were to be the ex-officio official members. The S.D.O. was to act as the chairman and the C.O. as the vice-chairman.

The Thana Parishad had the following functions:
(1) Co-ordination of all development efforts within the Thana,
(2) Implementation of development project entrusted to it by

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45. Ibid., First Schedule, Part-I.
46. Ibid., Art. 6.
the government, (3) Preparation of Thana Development plan on the basis of Union Development plans, (4) Giving assistance and encouragement to U.Ps. in their activities, (5) Promotion of family planning, (6) Provision for management of environment, (7) Training of chairmen, members and secretaries of Union Parishads.47

Zilla Parishad (Z.P.)

The Zilla Parishad was to consist of elected, official and nominated women members. But the total number of elected members were not be less than the total number of official and nominated women members. The elected members were to be directly elected by the people of the district on the basis of universal adult franchise. The government was to specify the ex-officio official members of the Zilla Parishad. The women members were to be nominated by the Divisional Commissioner - the 'Prescribed Authority'. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were to be elected by the Parishad from amongst elected or nominated women members. Provision was made for paying honorarium to the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Zilla Parishad.48

47. Ibid., Second Schedule, p. 37.
48. Ibid., Art. 7.
The functions of the Zilla Parishad were organised under the heads of Compulsory and Optional functions. 49

The government was to exercise general control and supervision over the Zilla Parishad (Z.P.). If in the opinion of the Prescribed Authority, anything done or intended to be done by or on behalf of the Z.P. was not in conformity with law or was in any way against public interest, the prescribed authority could, by order - (a) quash the proceedings; (b) suspend the execution of any resolution passed or order made by the Z.P.; (c) prohibit the doing of any thing proposed to be done; and (d) require the Z.P. to take such action as may be specified. 50 But the Zilla Parishad had the right to represent against orders of any authority to the next higher authority.

The elections to the Union Parishads and Municipalities were held in January, 1977 but nothing was done for an elected Zilla Parishad. The Deputy Commissioner continued to remain the administrator of Zilla Parishad and S.D.O. the chairman of the Thana Parishad. A parallel body was created at the Thana level, Thana Development Committee (T.D.C.). At the Union level a new body was created called the Gram Sarakar.

49. Ibid., Third Schedule.
50. Ibid., Art. 69.
Gram Sarkar or Village Government

The election for local government at the Union level was held in 1977. These elected bodies were converted into Union Sarkars or Union Governments at some places. The Union Sarkars in turn helped in the formation of a Gram Sarkar in each village. The objective of this new arrangement was geared to the needs of utilizing local manpower and stimulating local leadership.

For the development of Gram Sarkars two models were followed, viz., Madullahpur model and the Kushria model. Both the models had the following common features: (a) Organizing the village population into five interest groups - the agriculturists, landless, youth, women and people belonging to other professions; (b) formation of a village parliament known as Gram Sabha; (c) formation of village cabinet or Gram Parishad with two representatives elected from each of the interest groups and one additional member from the largest group and distribution of portfolios of village government among the eleven cabinet members; (d) making the Union Parishad member, elected from the village concerned, an ex-officio chairman of the Gram Sarkar; and (e) organizing advisory sub-committee for each cabinet member to help him prepare and
implement projects in his sector with the approval and assistance of the village parliament.\footnote{61}

In the Sadullahpur model, the Gram Sarkar, the Union Sarkar and the Thana Parishad worked in close association. All village ministers assembled at the union headquarter and met their counterparts in the Union Sarkar and presented reports for discussion and analysis. The relevant government officers at the Thana centre attended these meetings. Every month the department ministers of the Union Sarkars met at the Thana Training and Development Centre (TTDC) and conferred with the respective government officials to evaluate their performance in the attainment of the objectives of their plans. The Thana level officials of different nation building departments of the national government were required to work in close association with their respective departmental ministers in the two Sarkars. They co-ordinated the activities of the Gram/Union departments and advised and guided them.\footnote{62}


FIG. 5:2

STRUCTURE OF SHAWNIRVAR GRAM SARKAR
AND
RURAL INSTITUTIONS

SHAWNIRVAR GRAM SARKAR

Village Cooperative

Village Cooperative Association

Village Cooperative Bank

Gram Pradhan
Planning and Coordination

Agriculture Cooperative

Youth Cooperative

Women Cooperative

Agricultural Labour Cooperative

Other Profession's Cooperative

Children Cooperative

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Member Member Member Member Member Member Member Member Member Member

Agriculture and Forestry Fisheries and Livestock Family Planning and Women Affairs Agriculture Labour Secretary Religious Affairs Cooperative and Cooperative Bank Law and Order Mass Education Youth Sports and Culture Cottage Industry Rural Works and Health

Source: Harunur Rashid (ed.), Ganashikha, Dhaka, November 1980, p. 29
In Koshtia model, in addition to the features present in the Sadrulahpur model, the former had a system of sectoral committees for the planning and execution of development plans. The committees were: (i) village food production committee, (ii) village education committee, (iii) village health and cleanliness committee, and (iv) village cottage industry committee. All economic groups in the village were represented equally in these committees. Officials of the national government were also members of these bodies. These were headed by the U.P. member from the village and an elected person worked as its secretary.

The Gram Sarkar movement received whole hearted support from the national government. It was decided that every village in the country would have a Gram Sarkar. The term 'Samirvar' was added to the existing name i.e., the government termed it as the Samirvar Gram Sarkar (S.G.S.). The government formulated rules for the constitution and administration of the S.G.S. The rule stipulated that the members of the S.G.S. would be chosen through consensus of the Gram Sabha. Every S.G.S. would have a Gram Pradhan (village chief) and eleven members including two women.

53. Ibid., pp. 157-158.
The national government also formed a ten member organizing committee at each thana with the C.O. as its chairman and the Thana Co-operative Officer as its member secretary for organizing S.O.O. in every village under its jurisdiction. Other members of this committee were the chairman of the concerned U.Ps., Thana Agriculture Officer, Thana Education Officer, Convener of Thana Cooperative Youth Complex, Thana Village Defence Officer and a representative of the national women's association. 55

Alternative Strategy for Rural Development

During the first five year plan period, no major innovation in the rural institutions was undertaken. A general attempt was made to revitalise the 'Comilla approach' to rural development initiated in the 60's to provide open access to resources, technologies and training and extension facilities needed for the upliftment of the rural people. 55

Outside the ambit of the Comilla approach', three types of institutions and organisations in addition, were and still continue to be, in operation. The first is the conventional

co-operatives including the Union Multi-purpose Co-operatives at the local level, the Central Co-operative Banks at the intermediate level and the Jatiya Samahaya Bank at the national level providing short term credit. Secondly, trade based co-operatives were formed for meeting the specialised needs of the fishermen, the weavers and the milk producers. And thirdly, in some local areas in the districts of Bogra, Farukh, Mymensingh and Roakhali, intensive area development programmes were undertaken with external finance.

The first five year plan drawn up in 1973, emphasised the importance of the participation of the people in achieving the objective of the same.

Shawrirvar Movement

The word "Shawrirvar" in Bengali means self-reliant or dependant one one's own self. In the context of the "Shawrirvar Movement", the term has been used in its broadest sense, meaning self-sufficiency in income on the part of the nation as a whole, as well as self-sufficiency at each level of society starting from base to the national level.

'Shawmirmar Bangladesh' movement was a consolidation of the earlier self-reliant programmes of the various districts of Bangladesh. These district programmes emerged out of a resolute determination to save the country from the devastating effects of the 1974 flood. These programmes grew spontaneously at the district headquarters with the patronage of the Deputy Commissioners, public representatives, thinkers and intellectuals and the young generation. Soon the programmes started spreading throughout the nook and corners of the villagers of different districts. The thrust of the programmes was on generation of self-confidence at various levels. This self-confidence was translated through a number of self-help activities which were mainly:
(a) bringing all fallow/khas land under plough;
(b) preparation of emergency seed-bed for growing and supplying seed-plants to the farmers of the affected areas;
(c) launching of various crop schemes by the schools, madrasas, colleges and universities.
At a later phase, these district programmes concentrated their efforts in the speedier distribution of inputs and in ensuring optimum utilisation of the available resources.

The specific objectives of Shawmirmar Movement were:
(1) to arouse consciousness about one's nationhood and/or sense of pride in one's community.

(2) to improve the quality of life with emphasis on small family norms, clean water supplies and more nutritious food with a view to meeting all basic human needs;

(3) to organise institutions to cover all families in each interest group in the village, and to bring all these institutions into an integrated functioning under the auspices of an over-all village committee where all the interest groups are to be duly represented;

(4) to initiate a village organisation for channeling this spirit towards self-reliant local development;

(5) to provide local planning machinery for identification and utilization of unused, under used and ill-used local resources, both physical and human;

(6) to foster the growth of small rural business and off-farming employment by organising training to the disadvantaged groups mainly the landless, women and marginal farmers and by providing them easy credit from Scheduled Banks;

(7) to stimulate economic progress by disseminating new agricultural technologies, promoting knowledge and understanding of economic institutions and practices and inculcating a sense of value of work;

(8) to foster spiritual development by helping the community leaders to realize their ability to become an effective agent of social development creating in them a critical consciousness of the world around them;
(9) to develop a group of committed workers and leaders specialised in undertaking developmental tasks;
(10) to emphasise the role of officials as partners in development and develop better rapport between officials and the people through workcamps.61

The Shamirvar movement can be divided into three phases (a) Isolated locally organised programmes in 1972-73, (b) District Development Programmes in 1974-78, and (c) The Consolidation of the District Development Programmes into a National Programme in the later part of 1978.62

Phase-I

During the Phase-I, the student community of the country were tried to be mobilised to provide leadership to the movement as envisaged in the First Five Year Plan (FFYP) of Bangladesh. The programme included only ten colleges out of 611 colleges and 4 universities out of 6, of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Mymensingh and Chittagong. The first phase failed to leave any impact.64

These programmes were scattered over the country. Attempts were made by the proponents of the movement to organise the students by sporadic motivational lecturers. But it failed to produce desired result because the motivational aspect was not supported by the organisational links.

Phase II

The Deputy Commissioners were involved in the mobilisation movement since the middle of 1974. And it proved to be a success in influencing and mobilising rural public opinion. The involvement of the district administration came in the wake of devastating floods of 1974. More than half of the country, i.e. about 30,000 sq. miles were flood affected. The production of rice, the staple food of the people fell by 1.5 million tons as a result of the flood. The total task of organising relief and rehabilitation fell on the shoulders of the D.C.s. of the flood affected districts. The challenge to meet the deficit in food production was even greater.

The attempt to increase food production started first in Chittagong district on the initiative of the Federation of Thana Central Co-operative Association. When the district

65. M.A. Chasi, diplomat turned social worker was the chief spokesman of the movement. During 1973-74 he visited many educational institutions in the country and delivered lecture on Shumirvaf.
administration got involved the programme spreaded throughout the district. The programme was termed as 'Somali Shaw' (Golden Hundred). Comilla district also followed the same under the initiative of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD). A programme was designed by BARD to boost up agricultural production in two out of eight flood affected Thanas of the district. The plan drawn up in August 1974 came to be known as "Action Programme for Flood Recovery Operation" (APPRO). The D.C. of Comilla with the help of district agricultural authorities and BARD worked out a draft plan for the recovery of crop losses for the whole district. The draft plan was named as 'Comilla Agricultural Recovery Plan (CARP), 1974'. The two programmes were combined together under the title of 'Comilla Sabuj (Comilla Green)' to cover the whole of Comilla district.

The initiative taken in Chittagong and Comilla quickly spreaded to other districts. All the districts under the leadership of their respective D.C.s., started development programmes for food self-sufficiency. This was done under different titles and slogans. The basic strategy had been to increase food production by small labour incentive schemes based on participation by the local people.

The success of the programme varied from district to district. It is believed that the success story of these programmes depended on the relationship of the programmes
with the respective D.C.s. In some districts, the D.C. helped in organising the programme and then left it to be developed through popular initiative which was fully in accord with the Shonirvar principle. In others, the D.C.s. were more actively involved depending on the nature of urgency of food problems in the district. The situation during the second phase of Shonirvar activity was that each district devised programme suited to its own needs and circumstances. Every where it was the D.C. who led the programmes. D.C.s. identified themselves with the people in a bid to motivate them with the ideology of mass participation in rural development.

**Phase-III**

All the projects for the achievement of self reliance were operating more or less in an isolated manner. In view of their success it was later decided that these should be brought under a well defined national programme. A national conference of Shonirvar was held in Dhaka on September 26-28, 1975, and it was decided to adopt Shonirvar as the slogan of the movement for the whole country. A six tier organisational

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structure was formed. The apex of the structure was the National Committee of Shonirvar Bangladesh. It was a co-ordinating body. The other tiers were the district, subdivision, Thana, Union and Village. Each of these tiers had their own committee. And the objective was the attainment of self sufficiency in their own spheres. These committees

Table 5.3

In Shonirvar areas the following increments have been recorded upto December, 1983.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax collection</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment of landless peasants</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment of landless and poor women.</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishery</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disputes and litigations settled at the village level.</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


were to be headed by the officials i.e. the D.C. at the district level, S.D.O. at sub-division level, C.O. at the Thana level. Members were chosen from both officials and

non-officials interested in development. Committees at and below the union level were formed by the S.D.O. and the C.O. Thus the movement came to be a governmental strategy for development in the later part of 1978.

Table A.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Import for Sainirvar Training</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Village Leaders</td>
<td>4,83,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Officers</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Defence Party Officers</td>
<td>1,29,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Anwar (Male and Female)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers and Workers (Sainirvar) of</td>
<td>7,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MWD Power Development and Employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>3,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,16,483</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Mass Mobilisation Strategy

Another significant break-through of Shumirvar movement in the field of self-reliance during this period has been the emergence of a mass mobilisation strategy in rural works. The successful implementation of the 'Ulashi-Jadumathpur' project in Jessore district during November, 1976 to April, 1977 triggered off this thrust. The project was drawn up by the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) in association with the Deputy Commissioner's office. The project involved the excavation of a much needed 2.65 miles long canal to drain off water from 28.5 square miles of waterlogged area. The project was to be done by voluntary labour. The responsibility fell on the D.C. of Jessore and other officers directly under him such as the A.D.C.s. and S.D.O.s. to organise and motivate the people. A project committee at the district level was constituted under the chairmanship of the D.C. All district and thana level officers as well as chairmen of 27 Union Parishads falling within the project area were included as members. Below the District Committee, Union Project Committees were formed in each of the 27 Unions to mobilise the people and organise them for participation in canal-digging. The District Committee under the chairmanship of the D.C. met daily to review the progress of work on day to day basis so as to remove bottlenecks and ensure co-ordination of different agencies involved in the project. The project was completed on 30th April, 1977.39

**Assessment**

During the colonial days district administration besides regulatory functions had little functions in the sphere of rural and community development. The district officers undertook different measures for community development on their own initiative. In the 1960s, with the establishment of a separate department for rural upliftment it became an official responsibility of district administration. Local self-governing bodies, both rural and urban, of this period had also limited responsibilities in this sphere. After the creation of Pakistan the V-AID Programme was launched for rural development. But the programme was proved to be a failure. The lesson was learned that any programme for rural and community development to be successful should be linked up with the existing administrative apparatus. As such, the Rural Works Programme was intimately associated with the district administration. The Deputy Commissioner, the Sub-divisional Officer and the Circle Officer (Development) were made responsible for the successful implementation of the Rural Works Programme.

In 1959, with the promulgation of the Basic Democracies Order a new pattern of local self-governing bodies were created. At all tiers except at the Union level the officials were made the ex-officio chairman. The provision of official and appointed members was also there. These bodies were entrusted with functions quite similar to those of the earlier local bodies. Thus, local institutions under the Basic Democracies were turned into were
tools of the executive. The officials provided the leadership and guidance to these local bodies.

After the emergence of Bangladesh, the Basic Democracies system was abolished. The government at different times pledged to establish local self-governing institutions at all levels, to be directly elected by the people and to be free from official tutelage. But nothing was done to constitute these bodies other than at the Union level. In the absence of local institutions, the district administration remained the only administrative setup to provide goods and services to the people. The responsibility in the sphere of rural development was also entirely devolved on it. In 1977, the elected Union Parishads were turned into Union Sarkars. The Union Sarkars in turn helped in the formation of Gram Sarkars in each village. The objective of this new arrangement was geared to the needs of utilising local manpower and stimulating local leadership. The Thana level officers of different nation building departments were required to work in close association with the Gram Sarkars. They advised, guided, and co-ordinated the activities of the Gram Sarkars.

In Liberated Bangladesh, the Rural Works Programme launched in the Pakistani days was continued for rural development. Government adopted another strategy in this regard through mass participation on voluntary basis. This came to be known as the Shonirbar Movement. The movement started to meet up food deficit
caused by the devastating flood in 1975. The leadership was provided by the traditional setup of district administration. Each district drew its own programmes under different slogans. The next phase of Shamiyeh Movement started after the change of Government in 1975. Later it became a national strategy for rural upliftment. The administrative machineries at different tiers were closely linked up with the movement.

Thus in Bangladesh though the government pledged to establish local self-governing bodies at all levels but nothing has been done to constitute these, other than at the lowest level i.e., Union level. In the sphere of rural development, the Rural Works Programme of the Pakistani days was continued. The other strategy adopted for rural development was through voluntary mass participation. But whatever innovations were envisaged the district administration was intimately involved in these and it provided the necessary leadership and guidance.