CHAPTER VIII

ROLE PERCEPTIONS
Administration is regarded as a way of organizing and executing functions over a vast area for the development of human and material resources. It ranges from initial formulation of policy and its implementation to the evaluation of the results achieved. The ultimate goal for all types of administrative setup is the achievement of certain standards and constant efforts are made to evolve certain theories which should concern with, "how an organization should be constructed and operated in order to accomplish its work efficiently."\(^1\)

The role of the administrator is to give stimulating leadership, clarity and deep insight into the working of the organization which he serves. He is expected to represent expertise in the professional attainments, and to assist colleagues in developing a competence that will lead to the fuller achievement of the national goal i.e., development. In performing leadership role the administrator has to assess his own capabilities, i.e., his subjective opinion. He may over-estimate or under-estimate the degree of any or all of

---

his capabilities. His under-evaluation of some of his capabilities may lead to over dependence on others, unwillingness to take risks and indecisiveness.3

After the emergence of Bangladesh, the role of bureaucracy has been expanding because the total administrative machinery is geared towards the achievement of national development. Now the administrators have to face the challenging responsibility of such a huge task and require a commitment to the larger goals of the welfare society,4 to the norm of the bureaucracy, to the functions of administration as the agent of change. Such challenges cannot be effectively met unless they have grit, keen power of observation, thorough knowledge and a clear idea of the role that is expected of them.5 The administration is believed to be an art and development administration is much more so because it requires each administrator to be tactful, competent and resourceful. The expectations as to those resourceful qualities of leadership from each administrator are further conditioned by (a) the steel frame he is bound by and (b) the different types of responses from the public he comes across. The structures normally leave little scope for the exercise of initiative

4. "It shall be the fundamental responsibility of the State to emancipate the toiling masses, the peasants and workers - and backward section of the people from all forms of exploitation". Government of Bangladesh, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Art. 14.
unless the entire machinery is pervaded by an attitude of trust in the bonafides and competence in performance. 6

The administrators now a days come in contact with various categories of persons, and such relationships are growing in number and complexity. It is widely believed that the distance between the citizen and the government is widening and it is particularly enlarged because of the lack of rapport on both sides. 7 "An average citizen in Bangladesh never believed that he would get a decision from the government, unless he made the 'Tadibir' or personal request through some one." 8 Citizens perspectives towards administration are generally conditional not only by the functions the government performs, but also by their confidence in the justice and integrity among public servants. The basic tenets of a clean and honest administration have been described as "For administrative behaviour to be based on democratic consent, the public must be of the general opinion that the bureaucracy is guided in its actions by a set of principles.

6. Inder Prabha Vats, op.cit., p. 199
Administrative routines, however, must take into consideration individual differences to insure adequate dealings with clients."9

Under the ever increasing functions and responsibilities of bureaucracy in developing countries, the function of the public servants is to act as an instrument in the achievement of set goals. Where there is no clear-cut commitment and willing involvement on his part in the goals, there is the likelihood of deviation. These deviations coupled with certain mal-practices which are often alleged by a few, affect the general image of the public service in the eyes of the outsiders. Though not wholly correct, yet the general image of a bureaucrat is, "He is at various times (a) a perverse God who must be propitiated; (b) a recalcitrant as that must be driven; (c) a privileged mob, impossible to get the better of; (d) a lazy hound, impossible to bring to book and (e) (occasionally) a hardworked, underpaid and harassed officer doing his best under difficult circumstances. This last is likely to be a judgment by, and of, upper class layers and no doubt often coincides with the self image of the high ranking public servant."10

Professor W.A. Robinson describes the bureaucratic modalities as


10. C.R. Hensman (Ed.) "The public services and the people" in Community, No. 3, p. 44.
"Excessive sense of self-importance on the part of the officials or an undue idea of the importance of their office; an indifference towards the feelings or the convenience of individual citizens; an obsession with the binding and inflexible authority of the departmental decisions, precedents, arrangements or forms, regardless of how badly or with what injustice they may work in individual cases; a mania for regulations and formal procedure, a preoccupation with the activities of particular units of administration and an inability to consider the government as a whole, and failure to recognise the relations between the governors and the governed as an essential part of the democratic process."

The district administrative system with its unique characteristics provides the basic framework through which the national objective, i.e., development has to be realised. We know that every organisation or system is characterised by a set of institutional norms. The administrators who are actors in the real situation are placed in some institutional setting in which they occupy a particular position. Here position means place in society or in an organisation. It is 'set' in the structure of the group or of the society before

---

a given individual comes along to occupy it. The incumbent is, therefore, exposed to two related influences: one emanating from the position he occupies and the other from the institutional set-up he belongs to. What he expects from his own position and what he can actually do while performing his role are influenced, to a considerable extent, by the norms the institution he belongs to has developed over the years.\textsuperscript{12} Here "role implies a set of expectations applied to an incumbent of a particular position."\textsuperscript{13} Again, "roles describe specific forms of behaviour associated with given tasks, they develop originally from task requirements. In their pure or organisational form, roles are standardised patterns of behaviour required of all persons playing a part in a given functional relationship, regardless of personal wishes or interpersonal obligations irrelevant to the functional relationship."\textsuperscript{14} T. Parsons defined role as "that organised sector of an actor's orientation which constitutes and defines his participation as an interactive process. It involves a set of complementary expectations concerning his own actions and those of others with whom he interacts. Both the

\textsuperscript{12} Shanti Kothari and Ramashray Roy - Relation between Politicians and Administrator's at the district level, New Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1969, p. 33.


actor and those with whom he interacts possess these expectations. A norm is a rule or a standard that governs our conduct in the social situations in which we participate. It is a societal expectation. It is a standard to which we are expected to conform whether we actually do so or not. Moreover, it refers "not to the average behaviour of a number of persons in a specific social situation, but instead to the expected behaviour, the behaviour that is considered appropriate in that situation. It is statistically only in the sense that a significant number of people in a group regard it as a standard procedure." Norms are, thus, "the general expectations of a demand character for all role incumbents of a system or sub-system."

To have an understanding of the behaviour pattern of the officers at the district level it was, therefore, necessary to look closely at what they perceive to be their role, and at the same time, what norm they believe to be salient for their role performance. The word perception in administration normally refers to a feeling, a development of a certain image regarding the total administrative process. This image, later may result in

---

18. Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn. Organisations, p. 27.
developing particular attitudes, which in turn affect the behaviour of the personnel engaged in the organisation. We were, therefore, interested in finding out the normative referents the district level officers perceive to be pertinent for their behaviour and the roles they define for themselves. In this chapter, we, thus, tried to examine the normative referents and the role perceptions of the officials at the district level. We tried to observe on the basis of responses of the district level officers to a number of questions related to both the dimensions discussed above, (a) the amount of consensus among administrators on both normative referents and role perception, and (b) distribution of administrators on various subjects of the questionnaire relating to both these dimensions in order to find out their profile on these subjects as a group.

We examined the normative referents and the role perceptions of the district level officers, as revealed in their responses to a set of questions related to both the dimensions. Before going into details, it is essential to deal with the following three important aspects of the data on the basis of which we examined the normative referents and role perceptions of the

respondents: (a) the consideration for selection of components on a particular dimension; (b) the method of gathering data, and (c) the method of obtaining a measure of consensus.

Regarding administrators normative referents, we were interested as to what extent an administrator feels himself committed to bureaucratic norms. Because bureaucracy as a social system develops over time a set of norms into which an entrant is socialised. The norms, however, differ from one type of bureaucracy to another. As such, bureaucracy can be distinguished on the basis of normative referents it subscribes to. The type of normative referents that prevails in a bureaucracy has certain implications of systematic goal gratification. Speaking in a very general sense, if there is a large gap between the value system of the bureaucracy and that of the universe it operates in, the bureaucracy will either be ineffective in carrying out its task for its functioning will be overly characterised by conflict and tension. In either case, it will fail to perform effectively its task of systematic goal gratification. As it is now widely believed that the realisation of developmental goals in Bangladesh are dependent upon changed orientations of administrators in terms of greater pragmatism, treatment of bureaucratic procedures as instrumental to achieving systematic goals, and responsiveness
to people's demands, hopes and aspirations. Thus, it is of interest to examine whether administrators accept supremacy of rules and regulations and instructions received from above or tend to accept the view that, since these may ignore variations in situations from one milieu to the next, they must depend upon their own experience and judgement.

Regarding role perception of the district level officers we have concentrated on those aspects which directly relate to the relationship between the officials and the people, we therefore, emphasised on the following aspects of the role of the officers.

(a) Officials perception of their role under popular control of administration at the district level.
(b) Their perception on the autonomy of bureaucracy.
(c) District level officers perception of their image by themselves.

A questionnaire was prepared covering these dimensions of normative referents and role perception. The responses were recorded on four point scale, namely, strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. But in our analysis we have dichotomised them to 'agree' and 'disagree' categories.
District level officers' orientation towards rules and Regulations.

Observance of rules and regulations is essential for maintaining administrative neutrality and impartiality. It is an important characteristic of modern bureaucracy. The administrators are expected to function within the framework of rules and regulations. In a way rules and regulations define the powers and jurisdiction of the administrators. It is also argued that rules and regulations protect administration as well as administrators from unreasonable demands and pressures. But too strict observance of rules and regulations makes an organisation too rigid. Development administration being a specialised and dynamic administration demands judicious application of the same. Too much strict observance of administrative rules and regulations sometimes makes the process of development static and rigid. In the light of the above the respondents were asked to record their responses on five statements presented in table 8.1

Table 8.1 reveals that most of the administrators at the district level think that adherence to rules and regulations amounts to huge paper work. They form about 66.01 per cent of the total respondents. The administrators expressed that paper work results in voluminous reports and that these do not serve any purpose. Paper work consumes most of the time and leaves little time for field work. But administrators at the
district level are mostly extension officers of the nation building departments. Their jobs are mostly related with field work. On the other hand 33.96 per cent of the respondents

Table 8.1

District level Officers Orientation to Rules and Regulations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Observance of all rules and regulations only amounts to a lot of paper work and less of concrete work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If by ignoring some rules and regulations solving of certain problems in the district is facilitated, an administrator should not hesitate to do so.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Even if it delays implementation of programmes one should insist on strict observance of administrative procedures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The primary concern of the administrator is to see that rules and regulations are strictly followed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Administrative procedures are so rigid that an administrator has little scope for employing his experience and better judgment in improving implementation of programmes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Total N = 103
2. Since 'Non-Responses' have been excluded all the distribution may not add up to 100.
3. Total may not add up to 100.0 per cent because of rounding.
4. Figures in parentheses indicate the number of respondents in each group.
refuted that observance of rules and regulations result in lot of paperwork. They argue that paperwork is essential for keeping records, and records are important guidelines for future action.

On the question that the primary concern of the administrators is to see that rules and regulations are strictly followed, 63.11 per cent of the respondents agreed on it and the rest 36.89 per cent expressed disagreement. This indicates that the majority of the respondents feel that strict observance of rules and regulations are of foremost importance to the administrators. They think that it is their primary duty to see that rules and regulations are followed properly. The respondents argue that if rules and regulations are not followed properly then it would create bad precedent and it would also create the scope for nepotism and favouritism. Consequently it would destroy the neutrality of the administration which is essential for efficient and impartial administration. However, in the exercise of administrative functions there may arise situations where prompt decisions and actions are necessary. In such situations, strict observance or adherence to rules and regulations would delay the decision making process or might also aggravate the situation beyond expectation or even beyond control.
In this regard we tried to know from our respondents who are actors in real situations that what would be their reaction in such situations. 61.66 per cent state that if by ignoring some rules and regulations certain problem could be solved then they would not hesitate to do so. And 49.69 per cent say that they would strictly follow the rules and regulations instead of ignoring them. Here, we see that our respondents are more or less evenly divided into two camps. One half think that they are to work within the framework of rules and regulations and cannot deviate from those even if these help in solving certain problems. But the other half think that even though it is the primary concern of the administrators to see that rules and regulations are strictly followed but they can afford to ignore these if it helps in solving problems. They argue that administrative apparatus are created and are meant to help the people in solving their problems. And if an administrator feels that by ignoring certain rules and regulations he can facilitate the solution of a problem then he should not hesitate to do so.

The administrators at the district level mostly belong to the nation building departments. They are to function as change agents, and are also to ensure that development programmes are implemented as per schedule. Implementation
of development programmes in time depends on prompt decisions and dynamic action. Administrative procedures are made to facilitate smooth action. But sometime procedures turn into a very lengthy affair and delay the implementation of development programmes. In this connection we wanted to know the opinion of our respondents whether they would insist on strict adherence of administrative procedures even if it delays implementation of development programmes. 46.60 per cent of the sample opined that they would insist on strict adherence to administrative procedures, but the rest 53.40 per cent would prefer to ignore procedures to facilitate the implementation of programmes. Table 8.1 depicts that more than half of our respondents would ignore administrative procedures for expediting programme implementation but almost another half would rather strictly observe administrative procedure even if it stands against the objective of prompt programme implementation. Sometimes it also argued that administrative procedures are so rigid that the administrators have little or no scope for employing their experience and better judgement in improving implementation of programmes. 71.84 per cent of our respondents refuted this argument while 28.16 per cent agreed on this argument. In the exercise of development administration the administrators face many unforeseen problems and solutions to these require judicious
judgement on the part of the administrators. If an administrator has to depend only on administrative rules and regulations then the solution to the problem would be delayed. But it is interesting to note here that the overwhelming majority of our respondents do not consider administrative procedures to be so rigid that there is no scope for employing their experience and better judgement.

**District level officers perception of hierarchical values**

Another characteristic of bureaucracy is the principle of hierarchy. When there are a number of persons or bodies of persons acting together towards a common end, the question who is superior and who is inferior, who is master, and who is subordinate, arises. Otherwise, there is bound to be confusion and clash and the ends of the common action are bound to be prevented. Among the departments of the administration and the members of the administration within each department the question has to be settled which of them is superior and which is inferior, which is leader and which is follower.

In all well organised departments of administration there is a regular grade of persons, one person, or body of persons placed over the other from the head down to the last subordinate. There is a regular chain of office with many links
making it. It is a road leading from the top to the bottom, from the centre to the circumference of the administration along which are sent the orders of the superior to the subordinate and along with information and reports and other communications from the subordinate to the superior, from the circumference to the centre travels the other way. When such superior subordinate relationship exists in organizations it has been observed that the subordinates always try to please or satisfy the superiors. Keeping this fact in mind, following two questions were put to the respondents to assess their viewpoint on the above structural value of the bureaucracy:

1) An administrator should always ensure that his superiors are satisfied.

ii) If the instructions received from superior do not apply to any particular situation, the administrator should not be bound by them.

Data presented in Table 8.2 shows that 78.70 per cent of the respondents feel that the primary task of an individual is to ensure that his superiors are satisfied with his work. Only 23.30 per cent think otherwise. Thus we see that acceptance of this bureaucratic norm at the district level is quite high.

---

District level Officers Orientation to Superior or Perception of Hierarchical Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An administrator should always ensure that his superiors are satisfied.</td>
<td>30.10</td>
<td>44.50</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>14.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If the instructions received from superiors do not apply to any particular situation, the administrator should not be bound by them.</td>
<td>22.16</td>
<td>45.62</td>
<td>17.42</td>
<td>8.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 1. Total N = 103
2. Total may not add up to 100.0 per cent because of rounding.
3. Figures in parentheses indicate the number of respondents in each group.

An individual may ensure the satisfaction of his superior authorities by faithfully executing their instructions or by establishing a personal rapport with the superiors. He may even adopt both to achieve the satisfaction of his superiors. But it is also depicted from the table that the administrators at the district level do not carry out superior authorities' instructions blindly just to satisfy them. 73.79 per cent do not think that they are bound by superiors' instructions...
when the instructions are found to be not suitable to a particular situation. But normally they are bound by superior's instructions. The willingness of the administrations at the district level to maintain administrative autonomy depends on what they think good in the interest of local conditions or situations.

**District level officers Orientation to representative democratic Politics.**

Administration in today's world is geared to serve the people. Any democratic form of government ensures that it is run by the people, exists for the people, and that it is for the people. The wishes of the people reaches and materialized by their representatives and the administrators. It is expected that the two should work in harmony and close understanding for better realization of the hopes and aspirations of the people.

In our present study we have therefore, tried to gather information regarding district level administrators orientation towards democratic politics. Their responses are enlisted in table 8.3.
### Table 8.3

**District level Officers Orientation to Representative Democratic Politics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The primary concern of an administrator is to see that people's needs are placed to the higher authorities before decisions are made.</td>
<td>44.66</td>
<td>25.16</td>
<td>18.45</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. An administrator can be effective only if he accommodates people's wishes on every issue.</td>
<td>17.49</td>
<td>12.62</td>
<td>38.92</td>
<td>33.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An administrator discharges his duties well if he seeks the advice of political leaders in dealing with local problems.</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>41.75</td>
<td>16.80</td>
<td>10.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In case of different instructions from higher level administrator and people's representative, an administrator should follow the instructions of the people's representative.</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>7.77</td>
<td>22.16</td>
<td>59.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

1. Total N = 103

2. Since 'Non-responses' have been excluded all the distribution may not add up to 100.

3. Total responses may not add up to 100.0 per cent because of rounding.

4. Figures in parentheses indicate the number of respondents in each group.
Every policy and programme should reflect the hopes and aspirations and of the people for whom all governmental policies and programmes are framed. The administrators should be aware of the needs of the people and it is expected in a developing country that they should channelize or place these to the higher authorities for incorporation in policies and plans. 72.82 per cent of our respondents agree that the primary concern of the administrator is to ensure that the needs and requirements of the people are placed before the higher authorities for inclusion in policies and programmes. 27.18 per cent do not agree to this. They do not consider it to be the primary concern of an administrator. But the overwhelming majority of the administrators recognize their communication function. In a developing country it is the bureaucracy which is the most organised entity. They have a prescribed clear line of communication. They function as the main communication channel between the people and the administration. Development administration means administering for development. Development in a developing country means socio-economic development of the inhabitants of the country. These concern the people when the administration is for the upliftment of the people. It is thus believed that if people's wishes are accommodated in every issue, the administration is likely to achieve the desired objective. 30.10 per cent of
the total respondents agreed to this idea. And the rest 69.90 per cent disagreed. They argue that, it is not possible to incorporate people’s wishes in every issue. Because firstly, sometimes the people ignore the long run benefits of certain policies and programme, and secondly, they may have a different idea about the plans and programmes itself. In such situations their wishes cannot be accommodated in every issue.

In dealing with local problems, the administrator if seeks the advice of the political leaders, then it might produce positive results. Because it is believed that the success of developmental programmes depends upon the effective performance of the bureaucracy in collaboration with the local leaders. On the contrary, it may prove detrimental to administrative efficiency. Table 8.3 shows that 68.98 per cent of the sample feel that the administrators should seek the advice and cooperation of the political leaders in dealing with local problems. 27.18 per cent do not think so. Almost three fourth of our respondents realise the importance of the cooperation of political leaders in solving local problems. They consider that cooperation of local leadership ensures cooperation of the local people at large. And when a certain programme gets the cooperation and acceptance from local population its chance,
of successful implementation increases manifold. But in the face of contradictory instructions from the higher level of bureaucracy and political leadership the administrators do not prefer to be guided only by the instructions of the political leaders. This is quite clear from the table 8.3. More than 80 per cent of the respondents are of this view. In such situations of contradiction the administrators tend to rely more on the higher bureaucratic echelon than on political leadership.

**District level officers orientation to administrative autonomy.**

Maintenance of bureaucratic autonomy is of utmost importance. To ensure efficiency of the organisation the administrators should strive for the maintenance of administrative autonomy at all costs. In developing countries the administration as well as administrators are subjected to pressures and influences from various quarters. So our respondents were asked to record their opinions on the questions presented in table 8.4.

It is observed from table 8.4 that 74.76 per cent of the respondents feel that while undertaking any programme they should consider the ethnic and religious questions which may arise. Only 12.62 per cent held different opinion. But the country i.e., Bangladesh has diverse ethnic and religious
Table 8.4
District level Officers Orientation to the
Primacy of Administrative Autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Must do</th>
<th>Optimal</th>
<th>Must not do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An administrator should modify policy in face of popular demand.</td>
<td>49.51%</td>
<td>39.81%</td>
<td>10.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(51)</td>
<td>(41)</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. An administrator should pay heed to local ethnic and religious groups when undertaking new programmes.</td>
<td>74.76%</td>
<td>12.62%</td>
<td>12.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(77)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An administrator should take definite stand against unreasonable demands made by political leaders.</td>
<td>88.35%</td>
<td>7.77%</td>
<td>3.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(91)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An administrator should protect sub-ordinate from interference by local groups and politicians.</td>
<td>49.81%</td>
<td>36.89%</td>
<td>12.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(61)</td>
<td>(38)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 1. Total N = 108

2. Total responses may not add up to 100.0 per cent because of rounding.

3. Figures in the parentheses indicate the number of respondents in each group.

While formulating policies and programmes this fact should be taken into consideration. Problems which may create dissatisfaction among different ethnic and religious groups are likely to be exacerbated if

21. For distribution of Bangladesh population on the basis of different religions see, Chapter VII.
should be revised and if necessary be avoided or even abandoned. But on the question of modification of policy in face of popular demand only half of our respondents agree. 39.61 per cent think that they may or may not modify the programme. It means that they would decide on the merit of the programme. Only 10.68 per cent expressed that they would not like to modify the policy in face of any demand on the part of the people at large.

It is expected that the administrators would try to safeguard the integrity and autonomy of the administrative system. So it is not surprising to observe that the overwhelming majority of the administrators i.e., 88.36 per cent feel obliged to take a definite stand against any unreasonable demand of local political leaders.

But on the question that administrator should protect subordinates from interference by local groups and politicians 49.51 per cent of the administrators think that they must save their subordinates from interference by local groups and politicians. 36.89 per cent may protect the subordinate. It means that they would act depending on the situation. They want to play safe.
District level officers orientation to administrative expediency

In our present study we tried to gather information on the district level officers orientation to administrative expediency. The respondents were put three questions vis-a-vis,

(i) An administrator should keep powerful factions of local leaders satisfied if it helps in programme implementation;
(ii) An administrator should compromise occasionally with pressure groups; and (iii) An administrator should consider favourably the proposals of leaders who enjoy considerable public support even if such proposals are unsound. The responses thereby recorded are presented in table 8.5.

It is observed from the data as presented in table 8.5 the district level officers want to keep the powerful political leaders satisfied. They consider it essential for smooth functioning of the administrative apparatus which ultimately helps in implementing development projects and programmes.

But on the question of compromise with the pressure group only 11.66 per cent consider it to be a must and 56.34 per cent opinion that they may or may not ask for a compromise. And 32.01 per cent would not compromise under any circumstances.
Table 8.5

District level Officers Orientation to Administrative Expediency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Must do</th>
<th>Optional</th>
<th>Must not do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An administrator should keep powerful fraction of local leaders satisfied if it helps the implementation of Government programmes.</td>
<td>38.28 (61)</td>
<td>31.07 (35)</td>
<td>9.71 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. An administrator should compromise occasionally with pressure groups.</td>
<td>11.65 (12)</td>
<td>55.34 (67)</td>
<td>33.01 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An administrator should consider favourably proposals of leaders who enjoy considerable public support even if such proposals are unsound.</td>
<td>6.80 (7)</td>
<td>30.10 (31)</td>
<td>63.14 (64)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 1. Total N = 103

2. Since 'Non-Responses' have been excluded all the distribution may not add up to 100.

3. Total responses may not add up to 100.0 per cent because of rounding.

4. Figures in the parentheses indicate the number of respondents in each group.
**District level officers' Perception of their Own Role**

The role which one perceives of himself largely determines his attitude towards his role performance. We therefore, tried to know what the officer at the district level thought of their role themselves. For this purpose, four different roles of the public servant were described to the respondents who were asked to indicate which of them, they perceived as their role. The alternatives were:

(a) A government officer is a person who is above the common people and he should rule them.

(b) A government officer is a servant of the state and his main function is to protect the interest of the state.

(c) A government officer is a leader of the people and his main job is to guide and educate the people.

After the analysis of data it was found that none of the respondents consider themselves as person above the common people and that they should rule them. But a sizeable number of the sample consider themselves as the servants of the state whose primary duty is to protect the interest of the state. They comprise about 23.30 per cent of the respondents.

On the other hand, 30.10 per cent consider themselves as the servant of the people and their main task is to protect the interest of the people. Some of the respondents qualified
their statement by saying that the government officials are paid from the money which the people pay as taxes. They also mention that the government as well as the public servants exist for serving the people.

The remaining 46.60 per cent of the officials at the district level conceive themselves as the leader of the people and their main job is to guide and educate the people. They argue in favour of their statement, that in a country like Bangladesh where more than three-fourths of the total population cannot even read and write and where political institutions have not yet gained firm foothold, the public servants are the only organised and disciplined force who, out of compulsion, have to assume the leadership role to guide and educate the people.

District level officers Orientation to People's ability to run Democratic form of Government

In any democratic form of government the organs of the Government i.e. executive, legislature and judiciary are separated from one another. The legislature frames laws and policies, the executive implements it and the judiciary interprets it. Sometimes, it is argued that the concentration or combination of both legislative and executive authority in a single hand ensures efficiency. It is also argued on the
ground that as the overwhelming majority of the population in developing countries are illiterate they can not run their own government efficiently. So the people should be guided till they attain such level which would enable them to have their own representative government.

In the absence of popular government the task of policy formulation lies with the bureaucrats. In such situations, the civil servants also on their part would like to have an extension of their powers. Bangladesh unfortunately witnessed such situations more than once in just 14 years of her emergence as an independent state. Twice democratically elected governments were dismissed, parliament dissolved and the constitution was suspended. The civil servants assumed the role of policy makers as well as policy executioners.

Here, therefore, we have tried to know the viewpoint of the administrators on the competence of the people to run a democratic form of government. It would also reflect their authoritarian as well as paternalistic outlook towards the affairs of the state.

It is seen from the table 8.6 that only a few administrators believe that the people at large are not qualified to have democratic form of government. They comprise only 11.65 per cent of our total respondents. While 88.35 per cent held that they
Table 8.6
District level Officers Orientation to Peoples ability to run Democratic form of government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The people are competent to run a democratic form of government. Therefore, the task of policy making should rest only with the elected representatives of the people.</td>
<td>46.60 (48)</td>
<td>41.75 (43)</td>
<td>3.88 (4)</td>
<td>7.77 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The people are not yet competent to have such a government. Therefore, until they are ready for it, the task of policy making as well as implementation should rest in the hands of the civil servants.</td>
<td>9.71 (10)</td>
<td>12.62 (13)</td>
<td>30.10 (31)</td>
<td>47.57 (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The people would never be qualified to run a democratic form of government. Hence, the task of policy formulation and execution should be left in the hands of the civil servants.</td>
<td>- (0)</td>
<td>2.91 (3)</td>
<td>36.89 (38)</td>
<td>60.19 (63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 1. Total N = 103
2. Total responses may not add up to 100.0 per cent because of rounding.
3. Figures in the parentheses indicate the number of respondents in each group.
do not have any doubt on the competence of the people to have a government run by themselves. But 22.33 per cent, again think that the people would require some more time to have such government. Only 2.91 per cent as seen from the table 8.1 of the total respondents have a complete pessimistic attitude towards the competence of the people. They are in favour of concentration of all state powers in the hands of the bureaucrats. They argue that in the past, endeavours to have democratic form of government in the country have miserably failed. The number of administrators at the district level with such attitudes are very negligible. Thus, it is seen from the above table that the administrator at the district level are not opposed to the idea of democratic form of government. They firmly believe that the people are quite qualified to have such government. Though, twice authoritarian forms of government were imposed which resulted in the concentration of all governmental powers in the hands of the public servants still they have faith and confidence in the ability of the people. They would be happy to have political guidance in the affairs of the state.

**District level officers Orientation to Popular Control.**

The present district administrative set up was established by the British colonial power. The main feature of a colonial administrative set up is the lack of people's participation in
it. After the partition of India in 1947 and even after the emergence of Bangladesh no noteworthy attempts has been made to ensure popular participation in it. In the absence of any popular control the bureaucrats are at the helm of affairs and enjoy enormous power and prestige. We tried to ascertain the opinion of the administrators at the district level about the concept of introduction of popular control of administration at the district level. 40.78 per cent of the respondents think that their image and prestige in the eyes of the people would go down if they are made subservient to popular control. And the rest 59.22 per cent expressed the opposite. In every democratic country the administration is responsible to the people through political representatives. It is expected that the bureaucrats should not have any reservation against serving under popular leadership. But because of our colonial past and heritage, still about half of our respondents feel that their image and prestige would be reduced if they are made to serve under popular control. This again may be due to the fact that the officials have no past experience in this regard. Because this has not been tried so far, had it been practiced earlier, then such apprehension might have withered away. On the question of co-ordinator at the district level on the basis of election 56.31 per cent expressed their opinion against the idea. The rest 36.89 per cent supported the idea. This also
Table 8.7
District level Officers Orientation to Popular control at district level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. If the district level administrators are made responsible to the people's representative then their image and prestige in the eyes of the people would be reduced.</td>
<td>12.62 (13)</td>
<td>22.16 (29)</td>
<td>31.07 (32)</td>
<td>23.16 (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The role of coordination at the district level should be entrusted with an elected official.</td>
<td>22.30 (24)</td>
<td>15.59 (14)</td>
<td>20.39 (31)</td>
<td>38.32 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Administrative change like the District Administration Act of 1979 is necessary for bringing the district administration under popular control.</td>
<td>17.48 (18)</td>
<td>12.89 (14)</td>
<td>35.82 (37)</td>
<td>33.01 (34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 1. Total N = 103
2. Since 'Non-Responses' have been excluded all the distribution may not add up to 100.
3. Total responses may not add up to 100.0 per cent because of rounding.
4. Figures in the parentheses indicate the number of respondents in each group.
reflects the attitude expressed earlier. The administrators at the district level are almost evenly divided for and against the idea of popular control and thereby people's participation in the administration at the district level.

Some argue that to make administration responsive to the wishes of the people, drastic administrative changes are required. Others hold that change to this effect should be brought about through phases. The administrative change that was envisaged in the District Administration Act of 1975 was done on the basis of earlier argument. We tried to know whether the administrators themselves also believe in it or not. Table 8.7 projects that only near about one third of the respondents i.e. 31.07 per cent believe that radical changes are necessary. On the other hand 68.93 per cent think that this should be done phase by phase.

So from the table 8.7 we get the picture that on the question of popular control at the district level, about half of the administrators are apprehensive about their image and prestige. And that, changes to this effect should be effected gradually. They consider that the situation is not still ripe to bring about such changes. And on the mode of how the changes should be brought about, the overwhelming majority are in favour of gradual change. This may mean that they
are apprehensive about the administrative capability of the peoples' representatives, or may be, they still think that the people are not yet prepared to shoulder such responsibility and they should still be guided.

**Assessment**

The foregoing discussion on the normative referents and role perceptions of the administrators at the district level reveals a number of facts. It is observed that there are noteworthy variations in their perception towards norms and roles. On many points they have agreed unanimously while on many others they held complete opposite viewpoints. It suggests that normative referents have varying degrees of acceptability.

The bureaucracy is bound by rules and regulations. The respondents also value this principle. But our investigation also reveals that about half of the sample do not consider rules and regulations as 'an end in itself' rather, 'a means to an end'. They do not hesitate to ignore rules and regulations if it helps in the solution of problems. On the question of rigidity of administrative procedures, the overwhelming majority of the respondents feel that where situation demands, they apply their experience and better judgement in the implementation of programmes.
The bureaucratic norm of satisfying the superior is prevalent among the district level administrators. But at the same time almost three quarter of them feel that they are not always bound by superior's instructions when these are found to be not suitable in particular situations.

It is observed that the majority of the sample do not hesitate to seek advice of the political leaders, but in the face of contradictory instructions from the higher echelons of the bureaucracy and political leadership, they prefer to be guided by the instructions of the former.

Data also reveal that some of the district level administrators consider themselves to be above the common men and that they should rule them. However, more than three fourths of them consider themselves as (a) servants of the people, or (b) leaders of the people in the absence of firm or viable political institutions.

The respondents believe that the people are competent to have and run democratic representative form of government. But more than half of them are opposed to the idea of having elected leadership at the district level.