CHAPTER - IX
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding pages, an attempt has been made to briefly explain some of the major aspects of the administrative role of the Chief Secretary in Assam. As would be clear from the foregoing analysis, the present study is primarily exploratory, descriptive and analytical and critical. Nevertheless, the role theory suggest that there are certain role expectations held by the members of role-set from the central actor of the organization under study which is termed as “focal person”.

The Shah Commission of Inquiry has distinguished between “three broad categories” of administrators;(a) Those who may have simply acted in compliance with the orders or instructions given to them;(b) those who had carried out the instructions a little more zealously than others;(c) those who had exceeded or misused or abused their powers or authority for securing personal gain or for securing advantage to other individual(s) /organization”

Here an attempt is being made to sum up the role of the Chief Secretary in the following manner:

1. As Chief Co-ordinator: As Chief Co-ordinator his success depends upon his own capabilities and qualities of leadership as well as upon the cooperation and support of his senior and junior colleagues. In the words of E.N.Mangat Rai, “The Chief Secretary is a coordinator of other men’s work, the grain destined for palatable or unendible movement, between the upper milestone of the politician and the more substantial milestone of the civil society”

In order to successfully perform his responsibilities, the Chief Secretary should keep contact with the people, especially the heads of different public and private organizations, as well as with the leaders of different public and private organizations, as well as with the leaders of different political parties. This would enable him to receive first hand knowledge of the problems of the State and acquaint him with the people’s attitudes and actions towards administrative policies. The Chief Secretary should generally refrain from involving himself in minor issues and thus should concern himself mainly with
matters carrying significance. This will not only rationalize the burden of work but also help him in securing more confidence of his colleagues. He should inspire and guide his subordinate for effective performance of their duties and should present such leadership so as to inspire the entire administrative machinery to work harmoniously and enthusiastically for the political, economic and social upliftment of the State.

2. As Cabinet Secretary: Since both the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary have to act in close cooperation with each other, the Chief Secretary has to be a man of the former’s confidence. The Chief Secretary as Cabinet Secretary plays a very important role and acts as eyes and ears of the Cabinet. It is only with the close association of the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary that the wheels of the State administrative machinery can operate smoothly. And the coordination and cooperation between the political and the administrative heads of the State Government considerably affects the functioning of the Cabinet which is an important nerve of the State’s politico administrative system.

While performing his role as Cabinet Secretary, the Chief Secretary has to facilitate a blending of ‘political’ acumen and administrative needs. Without compromising with the basic requirements of good administration, the Chief Secretary has to emerge as a pragmatic administrator who can mould the administrative machinery according to the logic of democratic political system. And finally, he has to activate his bureaucratic apparatus to ensure that the letter as well as the spirit of the Cabinet decisions is faithfully implemented by those who are entrusted with the responsibility of executing them.

3. As the Head of the Planning and Development Department: The Chief Secretary, by virtue of his being the highest civil servant of the State, provides unique prestige and eminence to the Planning and Development Department and this helps in promoting the effectiveness of this department. According to retd.Chief Secretary H.N.Das, “A Chief Secretary with developmental orientation can give a lead to the developmental activities of the State and thus help in bringing about desired socio-economic change to cope up with the needs of development. For this purpose, what is required is not only his personal interest and enthusiasm but also his motivational abilities to positively influence his subordinates as well as the colleagues to facilitate such a change”. In case the Chief
Secretary, through his leadership traits, is able to get the desired cooperation of others, there is no doubt that the state can achieve its goals of development optimally if not maximally.

4. As the Head of Personnel, Administrative Reforms and Training Department:

The involvement of the Chief Secretary—both formally and informally—in various aspects of personnel management is sufficient evidence that he plays an effective role in the management of personnel and bringing about administrative reforms in the State. The Chief Secretary as the leader of the administrator’s team in the State is in a position to secure the integration of the individual and the informal groups with the administrative organization and hereby seek their commitment, involvement and loyalty towards the government. What is essential here is the Chief Secretary should aim at recognition and satisfaction of individual needs and group goals and provide maximum opportunities for individual development and advancement. This is, however, not an easy task and involves enough time and expertise on the part of a Chief Secretary. With his preoccupation with other administrative tasks little time is left with him for devoting to personnel and career development functions. Thus, what is required is a strong devotion and enthusiasm to bring about desired changes and a will to delegate functions to the experienced and bright colleagues. It may be suggested here a Chief Secretary should avoid taking more responsibilities of a routine nature and delegate such functions to higher and middle level functionaries. He should devote most of his time in bringing about innovations and changes not only in the organizational structure but in attitudes and behaviour of persons working within this structure. This again is not a one-man job and such the success depends on the cooperation of others around him. But with his personal traits and leadership style, a Chief Secretary can work towards getting the desired cooperation of others for the accomplishment of the objectives and targets of the State government. On his leadership primarily depends the texture and spirit of personnel development and administrative innovations in the State.

5. As the Head of the Unified Command Structure: As the head of the Counter-Insurgency mechanism the Chief Secretary of the State of Assam has a special role to play as he is directly involved in dealing with counter–insurgency mechanism. This is
indeed a peculiar situation in comparison to that of the Chief Secretaries of other Indian states. The key concern of over-all maintenance of the law and order situation has compelled the Chief Secretary of Assam to keep his attention focus to the situation of counter-insurgency activities. But as mentioned earlier because of adoption of ‘liberal’ approach of the Government of Assam since 2001 with the inauguration of Congress Government there has been departure from the earlier tactics and Government of the day made it abundantly clear the strategy of development was of equal importance. Since then all attempts has been made by the Government to deal insurgency by isolating the insurgents in the one hand and on the other hand bringing development right from the grass root level by making democracy more participatory and at same time operation of the Armed Forces under the Unified Command Structure system.

Factors which make a Chief Secretary successful: Thus, after considering the above aspects of an administrator working at the top level of the state bureaucracy it would be appropriate to mention some of the important factors which may help a Chief Secretary to become successful. Respondents opined that there are various traits which contribute to make a Chief Secretary successful. These can be enumerated as under:

1. Personal traits such as good nature, cheerfulness, evenness of temper, humanism, consideration trust, maturity and cooperation.

2. Leadership traits such as team building, ability to go along with colleagues and subordinates, political leaders and people, supervisory qualities and ability to motivate.

3. Traits related to executive ability such as decision-making capacity and job knowledge.

Further it was opined out by the respondents that the Chief Secretary should avoid certain behavioural patterns which may adversely affect the status and prestige of his office. In particular, he should not be arrogant, rude, stiff–coloured and unsympathetic. Secondly, he should not be over-strict and should avoid over-adherence to rules and regulations. Rather if the conditions so demand he may take a lead in setting fresh norms and precedents for future administrative action. Thirdly, a Chief Secretary “should avoid being a courtier” and “be a thumb impression of man in power”. He should instead maintain his
personal dignity and be “free from sychophancy”. The fourth requirement of a Chief Secretary’s behaviour is that he should not be too dominating. He should avoid suggesting that “I know everything” rather he should give consideration to others’ viewpoints and accept or reject others’ views on the basis of logic and not merely on emotional grounds. As suggested by a respondent, the Chief Secretary “should avoid exclusive forbidding tough me-notness, some of which was associated with the administrators of the past.” Fifthly though a Chief Secretary may have special interest in the working of some departments with which he may be associated prior to his holding the office of the Chief Secretary, this “special interest in specific departments should not be demonstrated.

According to P. K. Doraiswamy, retired Special Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh, another basic requirement of a Chief Secretary’s behaviour is that he should never project “strong likes and dislikes” He should not be a biased person and should take a balance view in matters of controversies. And lastly, a Chief Secretary should never refuse to meet any one coming to him either for personal favours or grievance settling. Even if he is busy, he may call the person and politely ask him to see him some other time. When a person comes to him he should give him full to present his case and should never project an impression that he is taking any interest in him.

**Conclusion of the Conclusions:**

The Chief Secretary enjoys a central position in the administrative set-up of the State and is surrounded by people of varied importance. On the one side there are the politicians—the Chief Minister, Cabinet Ministers, M.Ps, MLAs—and on the other are the administrative functionaries. Various employees’ union leaders and members of voluntary organizations also exert their influence on him and try to seek his guidance, and at times favour. All this makes his position crucial and even “critical” and the way in which he meets the demand of all these people around him, influences the extent of his success. The importance of the Chief Secretary’s role in State administration depends upon his wisdom and capability of handling the members of his role set in an effective way.
In order to be effective and to fulfill the role expectations held by members of his role-set, a Chief Secretary has to evolve certain basic personal and leadership traits. These expectations are as in the following:

**Impartiality**
Regardless of a civil servant's personal beliefs and preferences, and personal relationship with other civil servants or with politicians or with other members of the community, he or she must impartially serve the government of the day and treat members of the public and other civil servants fairly and impartially.

**Efficiency and Effectiveness**
The community pays for the resources that civil servants use. The community expects its civil servants to make the best use of these resources. This means that civil servants must work efficiently and effectively, avoid waste, extravagance and improper use of the community's resources, and maintain high standards of professionalism, probity, and performance.

**Procedural Fairness**
Procedural fairness denotes that decisions of civil servants must be reasonable, fair, just, and transparent. This means that the reasons for the decisions must be explained. It also means that the decisions must be made without bias or the apprehension of bias, that they must be based on the evidence available, and that anyone who is adversely affected by the decision has the opportunity to provide their views.

**Avoidance of Conflict of Interest**
To ensure that the community perceives the civil servants as impartial, effective and fair, it is necessary that the personal and financial interests of the civil servants do not come into conflict, or appear not to come into conflict with their official duties and responsibilities.

**Accountability**
A civil servant is accountable to the minister for the responsibility or authority he or she exercises on the minister's behalf. The civil servant is accountable for upholding the law and adhering to the policies and guidelines of the government. The civil servant is accountable for ensuring that the programmes, schemes, and projects of the government are delivered effectively, impartially, and courteously. Finally, civil servants are
accountable for maintaining clear records of the reasons explaining the decisions that they take and implement.

Responsiveness
While civil servants must be impartial and fair in serving the government and delivering services to the public, they must also do their best to familiarize themselves with the policies and aspirations of the government of the day and ensure that it receives frank, professional, timely, and comprehensive advice that is relevant to these policies. Responsiveness also means that service delivery is sensitive to the disadvantaged and weaker sections of the community.

Avoidance of Discrimination and Harassment
Impartiality, fairness, efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service depend on objectivity in personnel decisions. This means that civil servants must avoid discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, race, linguistic or cultural background, and disability in personnel decisions and in their relationship with colleagues. It also means that civil servants must treat all their colleagues and members of the public with courtesy.

Reasonable Care and Skill
Civil servants have a duty to work with reasonable care and skill at work, or while performing duties related to work. Reasonable care and skill include:

a) Observing legal requirements;
b) Being prompt;
c) Taking all reasonable steps to check that information on which decisions or actions are based is factually correct, and that all relevant facts are taken into consideration;
d) Taking fair and equitable decisions; and
e) Appreciating the special needs and requirements of different groups and individuals in the community.

Compliance with lawful and reasonable directions
Civil servants are obliged to comply with any lawful and reasonable direction by a person having the authority to give the direction. If a civil servant has any doubts about the legality or reasonableness of a particular direction, he should discuss his concerns with his superiors.
In addition, he has to protect himself as an ideal for others and behave in a manner that would be exemplary to others. How much a Chief Secretary can succeed in doing this would determine the effectiveness of his office. Here what may be suggested is that a Chief Secretary in all his dealings with various political and administrative functionaries, within and outside the State, should behave with a sense of dignity, responsibility and judiciousness which are necessary to maintain the status and prestige of the highest administrative office of the State. Notably, there has been no particular pattern about the type of person who can be successful as Chief Secretary. Persons with varied interests and mental attitudes have held this post. To sum up, the Chief Secretary of a state plays the role of the central actor of state administration and it is on his performance that the development of the State depends to a considerable extent. If his role is in tune with the role expectations, he can certainly bring about the desired social, economic and even political change with the help of a rational process of administrative development.

**Specific suggestions:** Following are the specific suggestions that I would like to make covering some of the important areas of the state administration in Assam:

1. Administrative background of the Chief Secretaries of Assam show that most of them remain in Central deputation prior to their appointment as Chief Secretary of the State. Since they remain outside of the State for a pretty long period of time they lose touch of the up-to-date field information. There I would like to suggest that once it is decided by the Chief Minister that a senior most IAS officer of the State cadre is going to be appointed as the Chief Secretary of the State he should remain on probation for not less than three months before going to take the charge from the outgoing Chief Secretary. His name should be declared well ahead as Chief Secretary designate. This probation period on the part of the Chief Secretary designate can be considered as the period of ‘Cooling Off’. Suitable modification should be made in the service rules to this effect.

2. There is an urgent need of security of tenure so far the office of the Chief Secretary is concerned. Though in principle the present State Government has accepted the recommendation of II ARC but there is no reflection of the same in the Assam Rules of Executive Business. Accordingly the Rule of Executive Business should be amended to
include this provision whereby there will security of tenure of the post of Chief Secretary in Assam.

3. The Assam Administrative Reform Commission 2005 as mentioned earlier has recommended for rationalization of the departments in the Assam Secretariat. My study shows that this recommendation if accepted by the Assam Government, it will go a long way in bringing coordination of the departments which is lacking at present.

4. At present the Chief Secretary of Assam has to perform his role as the Secretary to the Cabinet with the help of the Cabinet Cell in the Political Department of the Assam Secretariat. This studies shows that some of the States of India has got full-fledged Cabinet Secretariat Department which provides the secretarial assistance to the Chief Secretary in performance of his role as the Cabinet Secretary. Therefore I have recommended for the establishment of a Cabinet Secretariat department in the Assam Secretariat directly under the charge of the Chief Secretary. This will also help in better coordination.

5. The Planning and Development department of Assam was not that active for long period of time. This can realize from the fact that the State Level Planning Board has been constituted only in the year of 1998 and subsequently it was reconstructed in 2002, whereas the First Administrative Reform Commission in its report on Machinery of State Administration recommended the same way back in 1969. Moreover the State Level Evaluation Committee established in 1975 has not been functioning regularly from 1988. Therefore, I feel that the Planning and Development has the scope for becoming proactive and should be under the direct charge of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam.

6. There is no scope for training of middle level officers of the State Government in the Assam Administrative Staff College. Government of Assam under the leadership of the Chief Secretary should make necessary arrangement to meet the training need of this group of officers. As recommended by the Assam Administrative Reforms Commission 2005 this department should also be headed by the Chief Secretary directly.
7. I strongly recommend for gradual dismantling of the Unified Command Structure which is in operation in Assam since 1997 officially. Army should be send back to barrack as they are not trained to deal with law and order problems as recommended by top brass of the Army Officials time and again. Rather the Police forces of the State should be modernized and go for capacity building so that they can effectively deal with insurgency situation in the State along with paramilitary forces. Till then the Chief Secretary should always strike the much need balance of Civil-Military relation so that Army cannot take the upper hand in the name of dealing with insurgency.

8. Last but not the least, Chief Secretary should provide the much needed aspect of the human face of administration. He can play a proactive role under the present situation which I think the need of the hour.