CHAPTER - V

THE ROLE OF THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR IN THE PANCHAYATI RAJ AND THE DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
The introduction of local self-government institutions, and the new system of government introduced by the British as part of the reforms of 1919 and 1920, soon after the first world war, created a new situation, and led to a new phase in the arrangements for governance in the District, and in the functioning of the District Administration. The official apparatus in the District retained its structure for most matters, including, under the constitutional reforms introducing Dyarchy, those subjects which were more or less transferred to the charge of ministers responsible to the provincial legislature. District administration under the dyarchy was called upon to function in a way somewhat different from before. A number of matters were also rendered over more fully to the charge of the local institutions of self-government, such as the District Boards. These included, again in a limited way, education, health, the minor roads and works, and a few other things.

No wonder, then, if significant steps have been taken to raise the status of local bodies in the rural sphere since 1947. Thus, the 'Janapada' Scheme embodied in the Central Provinces and Berar Local Government Act of 1948 was an innovation of the first order and may well be called the precursor of the Panchayati raj. The Scheme aimed at converting the state into a "republic of Janapadas". The new Constitution of 1950 also includes Article 40 which calls upon the states to "take steps to organise village panchayats and to endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government." Gandhian influence is obvious behind this provision.

After 1947 the Collector was called upon to play a prominent role in the implementation of development programmes relating to health, prosperity and happiness of the people. The year 1952 witnessed the introduction of the

1 S S Khera, District Op Cit., P 83

Community Development Programme and the next year of the National Extension Service Programmes which spread throughout the country in subsequent years. For the successful implementation of these programmes it was found essential to harness into service the traditional prestige and position of the Collector. This completely changed the emphasis of the duties of the Collector. From regulatory activities the emphasis now shifted to developmental activities.

In 1948 a conference on local government ministers from all over India met at Delhi under the chairmanship of the Central Minister of Health to exchange ideas with regard to various problems facing local authorities. It was inaugurated by 'Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru'. He said in his speech 'Local Self-Government is and must be the basis of any true system of democracy. We have got rather in the habit of thinking of democracy at the top and not so much below. Democracy at the top may not be a success unless you build on this foundation from below.' On 1950 October 2, our free-Indian first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru launched a programme on 'Community Development Programme' for all over development in India.

The Community Development which was essentially conceived as a process "designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with active participation and fullest possible reliance on community's initiative" failed because of lakhs of people's participation. The people also did not convince any interest for several other reasons. The limited development that could be registered was attributed more to the initiative of the Government than to the people. To examine the reasons for the failure of Community Development and National Extension Service Programmes in the rural areas and to suggest the ways and means of improving them the committee on Plan Projects appointed a study team under the chairmanship of Balwantrai Mehta. Among other things, the Committee was to assess the extent to which the Community.
Development Movement has succeeded in "utilising local initiative and in creating institutions to ensure continuity in the process of improving economic and social conditions in rural areas," and to examine the organisational structure and methods of work with a view to securing co-ordination and greater speed in the despatch of business.  

The Committee discussed at length the problem of District Administration in the new context, while suggesting the organically linked-up three-tier system of Rural Local Government. The Balwantra J Mehta Committee favoured the block as a unit of planning and development in preference to the District which was thought to be large in area and population. Hence, the committee recommended the creation of supervisory and co-ordinating agencies namely the Zilla Parishad, at the District level with the Collector as the Chairman and Samiti Presidents, M L As, M L Cs and M Ps representing the District as the members. Thus, the Collector was given a central position by the committee while all the other officials and non-officials were reduced to a secondary place. The committee endorsed the historical truth concerning the importance of the office of Collector by proposing him as the chairman of this important body.

Democratic decentralisation with its three-tier pattern of popular administration was the result of the recommendations made in 1959 by a Study Team of the Committee on Plan Projects headed by Shri Balwantra J Mehta. It was soon to be called panchayati raj to show that its base went back to the democratic village communities of earlier eras. These were a natural consequence to the five-year plans of national development and of a realisation that for vitality and success, they had to be based on the life and thought of the villages and recognised to be primarily their responsibility. It was becoming clear that the eradication of poverty and the improvement of living standards which were the primary objectives of the plans, could only be secured if each village.

M Kisterah, Public Policy and Administration, Sterling Publishers Private limited, New Delhi, 1986 p 202
cooperated with an "integrated multi-phased family and village plan", providing
minimum essential health services, education facilities for children, adult
education programme, recreational facilities, improvement of housing and family
living conditions and programmes for village women and youth. The Balwantrai
Mehta Study Team pointed out that this could be done best, in fact done at all,
not through government flats worked through District officials, or charity offered
by government, but through the will and thought, initiative and planning of the
villager himself, government agencies acting as friends, philosophers and guides.
This gave a new twist to the work of the collector it made it complicated and
difficult and practicable only if the collector was imbued with a spirit of service
and dedication to the country. It was now his duty even to create an urge for a
better life, to suggest the means to it, to create local leadership, to channel to
good purposes funds made available by taxation and sometimes to raise them.6

The Balwantrai Mehta Study Team on Community Development and
National Extension Service programmes which in fact gave shape to the concept
of Panchayat Raj envisaged the following role for the Collector:

"At the District level, the Collector should be the captain of the team of
officers of all development departments and should be made fully responsible for
securing the necessary co-ordination and co-operation in the preparation and
execution of the District plans for community development. Where he is not
already empowered to make the annual assessment of the work of the
departmental officers in regard to their co-operation with other departments,
their speed in work, their dealings with the people and their reputation for
integrity, he should be invested with such powers.7

6 T N Chaturvedi, and R B Jam, District Administration, Indian Institute of
Public Administration, New Delhi, 1980, p 62

7 Report of the Team for the Study of Community Projects and National
Extension Service, New Delhi, November 1957, p 40.
Balwantrai Mehta Committee suggested the three-tier system of Local Government for successful implementation of programmes of the government. This system was introduced by the Rajasthan in 1959 October 2 on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, who was dreaming about 'Gram Swaraj'. Then it was followed by Andhra Pradesh in 1959 November 1. With the initiation of these two states several other states also implemented the recommendations of Balwantrai Mehta Committee as it is, and with some modifications.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh accepted all but sixteen out of 322 recommendations of Mehta Committee. In the original bill which was introduced in the Assembly, it was proposed that the Zilla Parishads should be presided over by the Collectors, as suggested by the Mehta Committee. However, the proposal was dropped at the select committee level in which the non-official members rejected the suggestion of an officer presiding over a body in which members of the Parliament and State Legislatures acted as members. Hence, a compromise formula was drawn as a result of which the chairmanship of the Zilla Parishad went to a non-official member while the Collector was made the chairman of all the standing committees of Zilla Parishad.

Thus, after the advent of Panchayati Raj, no doubt, some democratisation took place at the District level and below but the Collector continued to be the key official of the District, and the chief development officer on whom the State Government relied heavily for advance and guidance. He was the chief link between the Government and the Parishad. On the one hand, he was conveying the Government policies, directions and rules and procedures to the Parishad while passing on the decisions, opinions and aspirations of the Parishad to the Government, on the other. The Government's reliance on the Collector continued to be so complete that it was he who sometimes conducted enquiries into some aspects of the Parishad's administration in spite of the fact that he was an
integral part of the same establishment? The Collector's association with Zilla Parishad provided a blessing in disguise because for two reasons. In the first place, the services of a very experienced and senior official were made available to the Parishad free of cost. With his intimate knowledge of public affairs and administrative procedures, the Collector guided the discussions and decisions of the Parishad on constructive lines. Secondly, the Zilla Parishad found in the Collector an effective agent in conveying its problems to the Government and getting timely relief.

However, the membership of the Parishad created some problems to the Collectors. They had to use all their diplomatic talents to avoid political issues and controversies and at the same time take active part in the deliberations of the Parishad. Investigations revealed that opinions expressed by the Collectors were always considered seriously by the Parishad before final decisions were taken. Often, the chairmen of the Zilla Parishads consulted the Collectors before introducing resolutions in the general body.

The role of the Collector in executing development programmes within the framework of the Five Year Plans acquired a new dimension with the implementation in Madras State in the early Sixties of the Programme of democratic decentralization compassionately described by the rather imposing name "Panchayati Raj." The essential features of this programme as implemented in this State are

1) Formation of a Panchayat for every viable village,

2) Formation of a Panchayat Union consisting of Presidents of Panchayats at the block level, with provision for co-option of members representing special interests and participation of Legislators, and

N L Mishra, Responsive Administration: With Special Reference to District Administration, Amar Jyothi Publications, Jaipur, 1989, P 39
iii) Formation of a District Development Council with all Chairmen of Panchayat Union Councils, Chairmen of Municipalities, Legislators and officers of different development departments, with the Collector as the ex-officio President

At every one of these levels the official machinery is fully associated with the elected body for the very efficient discharge of its functions. At the village level the village officers are made responsible for the collection of taxes levied by the Panchayats. They also assist in the drawing up of village production plans by the Panchayats. At the block level, the extension staff of the Community Development Programme headed by the Block Development Officer have been placed at the disposal of the Panchayat Unions in drawing up programmes of development and for their implementation. At the District level again, the elected representatives of the people and the officials come together in fruitful association in the District Development Council.

This new pattern of administration has undoubtedly thrown considerable strain on the District Collector. The Collector is now the Inspector of Panchayats and in that capacity has to arrange for efficient inspection and audit of Panchayats. He guides the Panchayat Unions in the formulation of implementation of programmes for provision of basic amenities and for improvement of agricultural production. To this end, he has to secure efficient performance of their duties by officers of other development departments like agriculture and keep in constant touch with them and State headquarters for maintenance of timely and adequate supply of materials and equipment such as improved seed, fertilizers, pesticides, dusters and sprayers. The budgets of Panchayat Unions are forwarded through him to Government and he is expected to scrutinize them so as to ensure that they manage their affairs with a reasonable degree of financial prudence. Besides the exercise of statutory powers in relation to Panchayats and Panchayat Union Council, the Collector is very often called on informally to mediate in settling differences of opinion among
members of the Panchayat Union Councils. He has also to assist in the
promotion of cordial and constructive relationship between the elected members
and official machinery at block level. All these tasks calling for utmost patience,
tact and qualities of leadership have provided the present generation of
Collectors unique opportunities for serving the community.

Panchayati raj is the new vehicle of local self-government and of
development in the District. The panchayati raj concept comprehends an
administrative structure which covers the whole ground from the village with its
Gram Sabha, Nyaya panchayat and other groups, through the block level
panchayat samithi, with the zilla parishad at the District apex. This is an
experiment in thorough-going local self-government, with its main orientation
towards the economic development and social well-being of the people of the
District. Under the pre-Independence system of District administration there was
a cut-off at the village level, in the association of the people with the
administration.

The whole of the older District administrative apparatus is now related
to the new objectives, and to the new structure of local self-government
comprehended within panchayati raj. These involve administrative and
organisational consultation and advice, servicing with technical expertise, and a
general overseeing of the planning and progress of development programmes.

The emergence of these institutions has brought the politically elected
members of these bodies in intimate contact with the services in the District of
which the Collector has been the traditional head. Though the Balwantrao Mehta
Committee had recommended that the Collector should function as the chairman
of the District level body, a different view gradually began to emerge which was

G Ramachandran, The Collector in the Nineteen Sixties - Madras, Special
Number on the Collector, Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol XI,
No 3 July-September 1965, p 508

S.S. Khera, Op Cit, p 86
opposed to the retention of the Collector in any dominant position in the Panchayati Raj set-up which, it was felt, would not to be in consonance with the spirit of decentralization. It was argued that the Collector would, due to his eminent position, status and prestige in the District, curb the efflorescence of the democratic spirit. Accordingly, the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj legislation, which was first in the field, adopted a via media and made the Collector an associate member of the Zilla Parishad without any right to vote or hold office, whilst in Andhra Pradesh, Collector was made the Chairman of the Standing Committees. Meanwhile the Maharshatra Committee on Democratic Decentralization noted that "the Collector had hardly been able to supervise or guide the existing local bodies in respect of which he has considerable responsibility and authority". The Committee added that the appointment of the Collector as Chief Administrator of the District level body would make the position of former extremely difficult if there was a difference of opinion between the Government and the Zilla Parishad, and recommended that the Collector should be kept out. In an attempt to reconcile these conflicting views the third Five year plan stressed that the Collector of the District would continue to have a large share of responsibility in facilitating the success of Panchayati Raj institutions.  

The Mehta Study Team which pleaded so vigorously for the devolution of wide powers of the Panchayati Raj institutions could not have possibly omitted to refer to this important point and suggested that "the Collector will be the chairman of this parishad (the zilla parishad) and one of his officers will be the Secretary". It looked as though the history of the eighties of the nineteenth century was being repeated, though the circumstances had changed beyond recognition. That there should be some amount of State control over the Panchayati Raj institutions is beyond any doubt. They are, after all, what may be called the infra-sovereign geographic sub-divisions, and, therefore, the District.

Report of The Team for the Study of Community Projects and National Extension Services, op cit., p 19
Officer as the agent of the State Government in the District should have some means at his disposal keep himself in touch with their working, guide them in their initial stages, and keep the government fully informed of how they go about their work. But the point which assumes the form of controversy is whether he should play his role as a member or chairman of these bodies or as a observed from outside taking corrective action, where the Government so decides, and reporting to it periodically on their working.

The first official conference which discussed the question of his alternative roles in the Panchayat Raj system was the sixth meeting of the Central Council of Local Self-Government held at Bangalore in November, 1960. The conference resolved

"The Collector should be kept outside the three-tier system and should be the agent of the Government in the field with the duty to keep the Government informed of the happenings and the general trend of events, and, where the Government so decides, to take necessary corrective action. For these purposes, he may be entitled to attend the meetings of the Zilla Parishad/Panchayat Samiti or its sub-committees and also call for their records. But where the District level body is, in its functions, a mere co-ordinating and advisory body, the Collector could be associated with it more closely than where it is an executive body."

The Conference further decided that the District Officer and the Sub-divisional Officer should be responsible for carrying out inspection of the panchayats and the panchayat samitis and the inspection reports should be sent to the panchayat samiti or the zilla parishad, as the case may be, and to the District heads of technical departments for suitable action.

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12 Ibid, P 24
Eight months later the Annual Conference on Community Development and that of State Ministers of Community Development and Panchayat Raj held at Hyderabad in July, 1961, discussed the following alternatives

Should the Collector be -

a) Chairman of Zilla Parishad (as recommended by the Mehta Committee),
b) Chairman of Standing Committee, though not chairman of the whole body,
c) Full or associated member of the Zilla Parishad, and
d) Completely outside the three-tier system

Though the conference resolved that 'the Collector should keep himself in constant touch with the Zilla Parishad with regard to planning and implementation of the various development programmes' it felt that it was yet too early to indicate which of the following four alternatives, which presented themselves to the conference, were the best.\(^{13}\)

i) The Collector should be fully associated with the Panchayati Raj institutions and should be member and Chairman of the Zilla Parishad

ii) The Collector should be a member of the Zilla Parishad and Chairman of all its Standing Committees

iii) The Collector should be just a member of the Zilla Parishad with/without any right to vote and

iv) The Collector should be completely outside the Zilla Parishad but with a right to take part in the deliberations, whenever he considers his necessary

One of the other of these alternatives was acceptable to each one of the states which had either introduced measures on Panchayati Raj in their

\(^{13}\) Government of India, Annual Conference on Community Development and Conference of State Ministers of Community Development and Panchayati Raj at Hyderabad, New Delhi, 1961, p 22
legislatures or had already enacted them. Those who were in favour of retaining the District Officer as the chairman of the zilla parishad argued that the latter needed the expert guidance of the District officer for he could give the necessary fillip, with his administrative experience and authority, to the whole programme of development and also promote the co-ordinated effort of officials and non-officials. But there was a radically opposite view whose adherents felt that the Collector was the symbol of the old bureaucratic order, and should not therefore, be a chairman of a popularly elected body. This view favoured a non-official chairman for the zilla parishad, for this would inspire confidence among both the elected representatives and the people. There were two middle views, in between the two extreme ones. One was that if it was wrong and undemocratic to make the District Officer chairman of the zilla parishad, it was equally wrong and ill-advised to keep him out-side the Panchayati Raj system. The advocates of this view urged that the District Officer would be able to make his best contribution as chairman of the standing committee of the zilla parishad. Another middle of the-road view was that the District Officer should be just a member of the zilla parishad and nothing more.  

The District Officer has been the head of the administration in the District, Government's representative and agent in the field and the most important governmental functionary from the point of view of executing governmental policies of all sorts in rural areas. It will be difficult indeed for government and administration to reconcile to the suggestion that this post should altogether disappear. The suggestion militates against the very traditions of the system of Indian territorial administration whose foundation rests on the institution of the District Officer. This forms a formidable mental barrier in the acceptance of the suggestion. The abolition of the office will mean a bold and radical departure from the system of field administration we are acquainted with and are accustomed to working.

Besides, the question of appointment of the District Officer as Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad is opposed on practical grounds. It was

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14 Ibid., P 176
suggested as the Hyderabad Conference on Community Development, held in July 1961, that the District Officer must discharge the following broad responsibilities:\footnote{Government of India, Ministry of Community Development and Panchayat Raj, Op Cit, p 177}

\begin{itemize}
\item[a)] To function as a representative of the State Government at the District level and to work as an effective liaison between the State Government and the Zilla Parishad
\item[b)] To hold in the proper and healthy growth of the new institutions and in particular assist the Zilla Parishad to grow into an effective organisation for purposes of development
\item[c)] To ensure optimum utilisation of resources available to Panchayati Raj institutions, such as money, staff, technical assistance and other facilities from higher levels
\item[d)] To ensure that District Level Officers discharge their central responsibility for planning and supervision so as to provide adequate technical support to the programme
\item[e)] To ensure that planning by the Zilla Parishad and lower bodies is realistic, and is in conformity with national priorities or policies
\item[f)] To ensure that the Panchayati Raj institutions give due attention to the economically weaker sections of the community
\item[g)] To exercise emergency powers in case of abuse of authority by the local bodies or their office bearers as also in other cases in accordance with the provisions of law
\end{itemize}

This Conference consisting of ministers and administrators looked at the problem from the practical point of view. It wanted the District Officer to continue to be the representative of Government, the guardian of Law and Order, the promoter, helper and mentor of the Panchayati Raj institutions, and the supplier of adequate technical support and facilities to the District-level officers. It is evident that the District Officer can discharge this responsibility\footnote{Government of India, Ministry of Community Development and Panchayat Raj, Op Cit, p 177}
only when he is either outside the Panchayati Raj organisation or a permanent invitee to or a non-voting member of the zilla parishad or the panchayat samitis, rather than the chief executive officer of the former. The question, therefore, that deserves careful scrutiny, from the practical point of view, is the extent to which the District Officer should exercise supervisory powers over the legally elected representative local bodies in the District.

It may be argued that "there would always be need for an officer of the State Government, for functioning as its representative, guiding and advising the Zilla Parishad and exercising on behalf of the State Government some reserve powers of control over the Zilla Parishad, the Panchayat Samiti and the Panchayat. The Collector could be given this position. An officer subordinate to the zilla parishad cannot discharge these functions. He cannot, for instance, exercise his law and order duty independently or perform other duties prescribed by the State Government without being a suspect in the eyes of the zilla parishad. With the District Officer subordinate to the Zilla Parishad, the State Government will be left without an independent observer on the District scene who can report objectively on the progress of development work and on the operation of local bodies. He will be placed in an embarrassing position as he will have to divide the responsibility between the Government and the zilla parishad.

The District Collectors Conference that took place in the year 1967 is very significant from the far-reaching conclusions that the government took after its deliberations. Administrative measures to economize and speed up agricultural and industrial programmes were on the agenda. Ministers, secretaries and directors participated and came to the conclusion that at present no person could be held responsible for the short-falls in agriculture and other sectors, and unless responsibility could be placed squarely on the shoulders of one person, the development plan would be completely frustrated. On the other hand the non-officials' demand in Panchayati Raj was that in Andhra Pradesh an Executive Officer drawn from the Indian Administrative Services should be placed under

16 B Mukherji, Community Development in India, Orient Longman, Calcutta, 1961, P 211
the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad with the District Collector excluded from the Panchayat administration, as is the case in the State of Maharashtra. They wanted more powers for the non-officials over higher officials.

Instead of giving more powers to the non-officials, as was expected by the Panchayati Raj leadership, the District Collector was now made responsible for the implementation of plans from the District level. He is now called upon to formulate and implement programmes of economic development, especially in agriculture and industry together with irrigation, animal husbandry, fisheries, co-operation and marketing.

The Collector has now been placed clearly and unequivocally in executive control of all departmental work for implementing development plans. Thus, the powers of the technical directors of departments are delegated to him. The Collector's plan would be placed before the appropriate committee of the Zilla Parishad to which the Presidents of the Samiti would be invited. The Collector would be the head of each of the departments concerned in development and all of them would merge with the Collector's office. All the District Officers, such as the District Agricultural Officer, will have to carry out the orders of the District Collector. The District Collector and the Zilla Parishad Chairman will constitute the Zilla Development Board, to which all the District officials and the non-official leaders would be invited to discuss and finalize the plans.

The position of the Collector in relation to Panchayati Raj institutions varies from State to State. Broadly speaking, there have emerged four patterns of the role of Collector vis-à-vis Zilla Parishads. Some States, feeling that the Zilla Parishad needed the expert guidance of the Collector, who, with all his experience and authority could, as Chairman, will give the necessary fillip to the entire programme and promote the co-ordinated effort of the official and non-official agencies, have made him a member and Chairman of the Zilla Parishad. Taking a radically opposite view and arguing that the Collector "burdened with the multiplicity of functions and with physical limitations of time and energy"

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would be unable to do justice to the work of Zilla Parishad, certain State Governments have kept him out of the Zilla Parishad completely. Taking a middle view, a number of States have felt that though the Collector need not be made the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad, it would still be advantageous to keep him within the Panchayati Raj system, as he would always be in a position to make effective contribution in the deliberations of the Zilla Parishad. Accordingly, in certain States, Collector has been made a member of the Zilla Parishad and Chairman of the Standing Committees which are vested with considerable power and authority.  

I. COLLECTOR'S CONTROL OVER THE STAFF OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

These Panchayati Raj institutions with large staff at various levels of seniority and responsibility, it is necessary to evolve the channels of control and procedures for enquiry against the officers and staff of these bodies in the event of their dereliction of their duties and also for enquiry against the individual members of the Panchayati Raj bodies when they misuse their discretionary or statutory powers. It may be mentioned that Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parshads have two categories of staff at their disposal. Firstly, they have the Chief Executive Officers and various extension Officers whose services are placed at their disposal by the parent departments and, secondly, they have the members of the Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishad service itself. The Control and procedures for enquiry would necessarily be different in case of these two categories of staff. The question of control, in the present context, would relate only to the Executive Officers, as the control over the staff of Panchayati Raj bodies is generally exercised by their Chief Executive Officers or by the appropriate heads of the departments from which they are on deputation.


19 Ibid, P 639
The District Collector with disciplinary control over the Executive Officers of the Panchayati Raj bodies might take the form of (1) the writing of the confidential report which, if adverse, may effect the Executive Officer, in various ways and (2) the authority to inflict various punishments. Various patterns exist regarding the writing of the confidential reports of the Executive Officers of the Panchayati Raj bodies. As to the authority which has the power to inflict minor punishments on the Executive Officers of the Panchayat Samitis, in the case of Andhra Pradesh, it is the Collector whereas in Assam, Mysore, Orissa and Rajasthan, these powers are with the State Government. There is no uniformity in this system either.

The disciplinary control over the Executive Officers of the Zilla Parishad also takes the form of the authority of recording the confidential report, or inflicting minor punishments and, of administrative control by Chairman to a limited extent. In Andhra Pradesh, the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad writes the confidential report of Executive Officer and sends it through the Collector to the Government. In Orissa, the confidential report is written by the Chairman and forwarded to the Collector who prepares his own report in a separate form and sends the report along with the report of the Chairman in original to the Government. In Punjab, the report is written by the Chairman and sent to the Government. In Rajasthan, the District Development Officer (Collector) writes the report of the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad and sends it along with the comments of the Pramukh to the Government. In Uttar Pradesh, the confidential report is written by the State Government. There is, therefore, a wide variation in the authorities writing the confidential reports of the Executive Officers of the Zilla Parishad.

II. POWERS TO CANCEL OR SUSPEND THE RESOLUTIONS OF PANCHAPATI RAJ BODIES

Panchayats

It vests in the collector in the states of Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Punjab. The power to suspend the resolutions of Panchayat, vest in the commissioner in Andhra Pradesh.

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20 Ibid., p 340
Mandal Parishads/Panchayats Samitis

In Andhra Pradesh in Bihar, Punjab and West Bengal, it is vested in the State Governments Assam, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, the power is given to the Collector.

Zilla Parishad

In Assam and Maharashtra the power given to Collector The State Government exercises this power in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab and West Bengal, the Commissioner in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. It is, thus, clear that there is a general trend towards granting the powers of suspending a resolution of Panchayat or Panchayat Samiti to the Collector whereas the powers to suspend a resolution of the Zilla Parishad are generally given to the Commissioner or the State Governments.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS TO REMOVE OFFICE-BEARERS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ BODIES

In no state are these powers given to the collector in respect of office-bearers of Panchayat Samiti/Mandal Parishad and Zilla Parishads. In Karnataka, the Collector is competent to remove office bearers of panchayats, while in Rajasthan he can remove panchayats.

From the foregoing it will be seen that in the matter of the removal of office bearers of the Panchayati Raj bodies the general tendency is towards giving these powers to the State Governments. This is a very desirable provision in the Panchayati Raj legislations of different States and should remain unchanged in the case of Panchayat Samitis/Mandal Parishads and Zilla Parishads.


22 Ibid, p 371
IV. **POWERS TO SUSPEND AND DISSOLVE THE PANCHAYATI RAJ BODIES**

We now come to the powers of suspension and dissolution of the Panchayat Raj bodies themselves. The decision to suspend a Panchayat Raj body has to be taken after great deliberation and serious thought. It is, therefore, natural that these powers should be vested at as high a level as possible. In the case of the Panchayats the powers to suspend or dissolve vest in the State Governments in Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and in the Deputy Commissioner in Orissa.\(^{23}\)

So far as panchayat samitis/mandal parishads and Zilla Parishads are concerned, in no state is the collector competent to suspend or dissolve these bodies.

V **EMERGENCY POWERS**

In practically every state, collector have been invested with powers, to suspend resolutions of the parishad or samiti if their execution is likely to cause danger to human life, health or safety or is likely to lead to a branch of peace and to direct the execution of certain classes of works or resolutions.

It is obvious from what has been stated above that notions about the collector’s position in the context of panchayati raj vary from state to state, that in certain states, his position has been strengthened vital issue, most states are still undecided.

Apart from the statutory supervision and control exercised by the Collector over the Panchayati Raj institutions, the problem of mutual adjustments and harmonious relations remains. No amount of statutory control can provide the harmony that is necessary between the Collector as the representative of the Government on one hand and Panchayati Raj bodies as the

\(^{23}\) H.C Panda, Op Cit, P 641
popular representative institution on the other, to make the massive Plan effort a success. The development of harmonious relationship between the normal administration and the new democratic institutions has been watched with considerable interest over several years. Prior to the introduction of Panchayat Raj, there were considerable misgivings about this relationship. Broadly speaking, the Collectors have by now developed, by and large, a feeling of loyalty to these institutions. The non-officials have acquired more balanced outlook and a greater degree of tolerance than before and have tried to learn the intricacies of administrative pattern showing a willingness to abide by the rules and regulations and to work within the framework of legislation enacted for them. In cases of maladjustment, the officials are apt to complain that representatives of Panchayati Raj bodies, brought into office as a result of the support of certain groups, show a tendency to act in furtherance of the interests of these groups and, therefore, do not exhibit impartiality when decisions affecting the interest of these groups are taken by the Panchayati Raj bodies. The non-official, on the other hand, tend to feel that officials are generally not attuned to popular aspirations and shy away from tendering whole-hearted assistance to Panchayati Raj bodies.24

The Collector's position in Zilla Parishad in Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and in Maharashtra is different from that of all states. The Collector's position in these states is that, he is outside from the Zilla Parishad. In Karnataka State the Collector is the President of the District Development Council. According to new Bills, he will be outside the Zilla Parishad. However, an officer of Collector's status is proposed to be posted as Chief Executive Officer. In Orissa, Collector does not have right to vote and can attend and participate in meetings of Samitis and Standing Committees. He is Chairman of Administrative Co-ordination Committee of the Parishad. The Collector in Uttar Pradesh is not a member of the Zilla Parishad. He may attend meetings of the

24 Ibid, p 642
parishad, without right to vote. He may send communication to the Zilla parishad for being read at its meetings and for discussion.

The Collector is also an important link between the Panchayati Raj institutions and the State Government. He has to bring to the notice of the Government the needs and aspirations of the people, as articulated by the members of the institutions. He must attempt to ensure that these needs and aspirations are given due attention by various departments of the State Government and are reflected in the State. At the same time, he has to see that the priorities and targets laid down by the State Government are adhered to by the institutions and the latter play their full role in obtaining people's participation in development activities. In this process, the Collector has to do much explaining to the State Government and to the Panchayati Raj institutions. He has often to play the same role between the District Level Officers and their own heads of departments.

This may sound surprising, but is very often the case. The State Level Officers do not often appreciate sufficiently the difficulties of their local officers - in not giving adequate emphasis to particular activities or asking for greater attention (higher priority, larger funds) for other activities. The local officers have particular difficulty in convincing their superiors, when they have low status. But their point of view is likely to be appreciated better when it is reinforced by the views of the Collector who has higher status, has an overall view of the needs of the District, and knows the views of the popular representatives.

The system of Panchayati Raj institutions provides for direct communication between the local institutions and the State Government. Besides, various individuals - the M L A s, influential members of the institutions and other local leaders, act as communicators between the two. But the Collector is the most important link between them, because the State Government must

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depend upon him for authoritative appreciation of the local situation and must convey its decisions and wishes through him. The importance of effective communication between the State Government and local institutions can hardly be over-emphasized: it is the medium through which national objectives, policies and priorities on the one hand and local aspirations and felt needs on the other are brought together in the planning process and local participation in planning and execution of development programmes, as secured Its importance will increase progressively as local leaders have better understanding of their problems and needs and display greater initiative in mobilizing local resources for implementation of programmes.

It is in this context that the question of the precise position of the Collector in the structure of the Panchayati Raj institutions has assumed great importance. The question has proved baffling and a satisfactory solution is yet to emerge. The same fluid situation which prevailed in 1961, when the question was considered by the Annual Conference of Development Commissioners, obtains even today. Different systems prevail in different parts of the country. In some states the Collector is within the fold of Panchayati Raj institutions and in other places he is without. Where he is within, he is either a voting member, a non-voting member, Chairman of the Standing Committees or Chairman of the whole body. Where he is without, he has either some formal powers of supervision or none whatsoever. The formal powers, in turn, are at some places regular and at others of an emergency nature. An optimum position is still to emerge out of the crucible of experience. But certain logical possibilities about the outcome could be analysed. Where the Collector is Chairman of the Zilla Parishad, the Chairman could never grow into a full-fledged autonomous institution and the democratic principle will suffer. Where the Collector is the Chairman of the Standing Committees, sooner or later a clash is likely to develop between the Collector and the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad. In this clash, if

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26 Ibid, p 608
the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad prevails, the Collector would be ineffective. On the other hand should the Collector prevail, democracy will receive a setback. Where the Collector is a voting member, his undemocratic membership is bound to inhibit a free expression of his opinion and even compromise his freedom to take independent administrative action. Where he is a non-voting member, his presence will be a mere mockery.

Collector is regarded as the principal representative of Government in the District in all matters. As regards the Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis, the Collector is mainly concerned with the enforcement of the provisions relating to elections, voting rights, and several other procedures etc of the members of the Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis, audit reports and selection of staff. He has not been entrusted with any specific functions in regard to the development administration of these bodies.

At present, the Collector has to watch and approve the compliance reports on all the points in the audit notes drawn up by the Chief Auditor, Local Fund Accounts. The number of pending audit notes are increasing every year. To facilitate compliance of audit notes within the prescribed time, it is suggested that the Chief Executive Officer may be authorised by suitable amendment of the Rule to deal with all minor audit points and only important objections involving misappropriation or misapplication of funds, recoveries through coercive measures and those leading to the arrest and prosecution of village panchayat members/officials may continue to be handled by the Collector. For this work in the Zilla Parishad, it will be necessary to give one Senior Assistant in the Village Panchayat Branch of the General Administration Department.


Government appoints a District Selection Board for each District under section 250 of the Zilla Parishads Act for recruitment of personnel in the District Services, Class III and Class IV. The Board consists of:

1) Collector as the Chairman,
2) Two non-officials who are also members of the Divisional Selection Board as Members,
3) Chief Executive Officer, or the concerned Head of Department of the Zilla Parishad as Adviser,
4) Resident Deputy Collector or an officer of the Deputy Collector's rank, as Secretary.

The work of the Board is attended to in the General Branch by one clerk sanctioned for the purpose.

The role of the Collector in the Panchayati Raj institutions cannot be considered in isolation. The Collector occupies a key position in the District by virtue of his intimate knowledge of and relations with almost all Government departments and affairs of public importance. In view of the multifarious nature of his duties and responsibilities, it may not be pragmatic for the Collector to assume directly the responsibility of the Panchayati Raj administration. His role in the Panchayati Raj institutions has, therefore, to be one of intimate and active associations rather than that of direct involvement.

By virtue of his central position and varied experience of administration, the Collector can ensure harmonious working of the official and non-official wings of Panchayati Raj. For performing this task smoothly and effectively, the Collector has to be given the necessary administrative control over the official machinery and powers of regulation and inspection in regard to the working of Panchayati Raj institutions.28

The introduction of Panchayati Raj enhances greatly the responsibility of the technical departments at the State level. They should transmit the best guidance and experience available in each field of development, provide adequate

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training for the elected representatives, and assist them generally in fulfilling the onerous responsibilities which Panchayati Raj places on them.

The Collector of the District should continue to have a large share of responsibility in facilitating the success of Panchayati Raj institutions. He has the duty of ensuring co-ordination at the District level between the Zilla Parishad and the technical officers in different fields, close contacts between the latter and the Panchayat Samitis and Extension Officers at the block level, and a guidance from departments at the State level. An important aspect of the Collector's work should be to assist democratic institutions and conventions in day-to-day work and in administrative relationship based on recognition of their distinctive contribution in fulfilling common objectives.

This brings us to the question as to what specific duties, responsibilities and powers should be assigned to the Collector in relation to the Panchayati Raj institutions so that these grow on healthy lines and at the same time, their initiative and independent functioning are not hampered. Panchayati Raj institutions have to function within the overall framework of District administration. They have to depend upon the good offices of the staff of other departments which are not directly under their control.

Against this background, Panchayati Raj Institutions were revived in the Andhra Pradesh State in the year 1986 under a radically revised structure envisaging direct election of the Chairman of Zilla Parishads, Presidents of Mandal Parishads and Village Sarpanches. Thus, the Chairman of Zilla Parishad has been elected by a constituency which is much larger than that of even a Member of Parliament.

Mandals which also were in innovation in the place of the earlier taluks are however smaller in area than the latter. Consistent with the size of his popular support, the Chairman, Zilla Parishad, has been accorded protocol status on par with a Minister of State in the Government. But, the institution of the District Planning Board has been retained to determine the contours of economic development in the District, allocate resources and monitor implementation.

36 N.L. Mishra, Op cit., P 46
Chairman Zilla Parishad is a mere member of the District Planning Board. This arrangement points to serious reservations on the part of the State Government regarding the amendability and willingness of the chairman Zilla Parishad to advise, direction and control of the State Government. It even smacks of the fear that if funds for development were to devolve to the zilla parishad and mandal parishads on a statutory basis, the heads of these institutions may in course of time, become formidable centres of power in their own right and in rivalry to members of the legislature and even ministers. The threat becomes even more serious if they were to belong to political parties other than the one in power in the State. It is, however, relevant to mention here that in the neighbouring Karnataka, where also are direct elections to Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samithis have been accepted, a corresponding delegation of power and authority as also a substantial devolution of finances to these institutions has been conceded. In a few other states like Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat also, these institutions enjoy wide and tangible financial and other powers independent of the District Collector.  

Paradoxically, while the Panchayat Raj Institutions and their elected heads are struggling to come into their own, the District Collectors are feeling an erosion in their authority too less. It is a fact which is not, however, acknowledged by the District Collectors themselves that they are being made to bite far more than they can chew. Their heavy preoccupation with developmental aspects of District Administration has resulted in relative neglect of their regulatory and enforcement functions. This in turn has made for a measure of autonomy in the functioning of other district heads like the District Superintendent of Police.

The growing feelings of crossing of authority and insecurity of service have provided the impetus for the series of conferences of District Collectors attended by the Prime Minister himself during the last two years. These meetings have understandably aroused the doubts of state government controlled...
by opposition parties, as attempts at establishing a direct nexus between
the Central Government and the District Administration. The same has to be said
of the latter exercise at providing a constitutional framework and basis for the
Panchayat Raj Institutions. Thus, in the years to come, there is going to be
considerably ferment with regard to the reformation of the District
Administration.

The new Collector would be the "eyes and ears" of Government, and if not
the "friend, philosopher and guide", at least a "corrector", "inspector" and
"ombudsman" of the panchayati raj institutions. 32

DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

The phrase 'Development' according to Webster's New Collegiate
Dictionary 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. In Indian context, it would mean to provide the teeming millions - an
opportunity to lead a better life, devoid of poverty, and other ills that it carries
with it. The concern of welfare state has gained wide acceptance. The socialist
policies of society are a goal as envisioned by the government. Thus in the widest
sense, the term development includes 33

1 Economic development including agriculture and other activities adopted
to building up of beneficial assets.
2 Social development programmes like health, education, housing and the
like.
3 Socio-economic programmes including measures of social security.
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 and the like.

32 P.R.Dubhashi, Op Cit, P 623
33 K. Santharam, Background Paper on Development Administration and
Panchayati Raj for the orientation course in Development Administration,
Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, 1965, P 26
Thus, 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. It refers to the structure, organisation and organisational behaviour necessary for the implementation of the schemes. The word development generally indicated those bodies of thought that centre around growth and directional change. In this study development is intended to connot precisely the kind of planned change that is intended at the District level and below.

The Group of functions with which the District Administration is concerned may be grouped under the term "Development" to those who may think that this business of development and attention to the welfare of the people is something rather new, and in fact a new lead or new imposition upon the District Administration is laid down.

An ignorant villager may not know anything of the constitution of the country, but he views the collector as the kingpin of district administration, a symbol of authority and a living reality to him. Individuals of all walks of life approach the Collector for redressing their grievances and seeking remedies for their problems.

The Collector is the principal coordinator of the development programme of the District. With his administrative experience, he plays a dominant role in the realisation of the objectives of Panchayat raj and rural development. As the leader of the team of officials of development departments, the collector has to ensure that the development targets are achieved within the time frame to the general satisfaction of the people.

The community development movement is to bring about a psychological revolution among the villagers to improve their standards of living by their own co-operative efforts. According to the decision of the planning commission some 5000 blocks were set up in the country, each consisting of about 100 villages.

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35 S.S.Khera, Op cit, p 35
Each block was to be a unit of planning and development and to have an integrated programme of rural development. Hence at the block level, the various departmental agencies were to be integrated. A team of extension officers from the various departments such as Agriculture, Animal husbandry, Co-operation, Public works, Rural Industry, Irrigation, Education, Social Education and Women's education needed by Block Development Officer was constituted. No development department was to function independently at the block level. At the village level, a functionary called village level works was also created to function under the guidance of all the extension officers and deal with all the problems of the villagers. 36

District Collector exercises general control over community development administration in the District. One of his most important duties in this connection is to co-ordinate at the District level the work of the development departments specifically concerned with community development. These departments are Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Irrigation and Reclamation, Health and Rural Sanitation, Education, Social Education, Communications, Rural Arts & crafts, Industries, Electricity, Mines, Tourists, Labour, Forests and Statistics.

It was realized from the very beginning all over India, that the collector as the general purpose and senior most officer in the District was the most suitable officer for taking over the responsibility of the District Development Programme. All the Development Officers have to send in advance their tour programmes to the collector. They can proceed on casual leave with the permission of the collector. Their applications for regular leave are forwarded through the collector. The collector gives his remarks in the character roll of the officers. His guidance, however, is confined to the administrative matters only and the technical supervision is exercised by the Heads of Departments. The latter keep the collector informed of all the Departmental development schemes which are likely to be implemented in the District. 37

36 S.N. Sadasivan, Op Cit, P 75

PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM IN ANDHRA PRADESH

DISTRICT COLLECTOR

ZILLA PARISHAD
(District Level)

STANDING COMMITTEES

MANDAL PARISHAD
(Block Level or Tahsil Level)

STANDING COMMITTEES

VILLAGE PANCHAYATS
(Village or Group of Villages)

GRAM SABHA
(Adults Residents in the Village Panchayati Area)

Direct Line of Authority

Supervision, Co-ordination

Source  Zilla Parishad Office, Chittoor
The main role of the Development Commissioner was to co-ordinate the activities of the various Development Departments at the state level for the success of the Community Development Programme and the National Plan. In the early stages of the Community Development Programme, the Collector was hardly in the picture mainly because his pivotal position had not been recognised by then, even in the conventional administration. The project execution officer or the Block Development Officer had to work directly under the control and supervision of the Development Commissioner and the District Officer was virtually out of the line of Development Administration. In such a situation it became difficult to obtain full co-operation and support of the different Development departments to the programme taken up in the blocks, without which it remained ineffective. 35

The work became difficult for every District Development Officer or Project Executive Officer to approach the State Government or the head of Department for the solution of their problems. It was soon clear that the problems of co-ordination had to be solved not merely at the state headquarters, but also at the district and sub-divisional levels. In order to make the programme a success, it was necessary that the technical officers at the District and State level should work together as a team. The importance of the Collector as co-ordinator of Developmental programmes at District level was emphasised.

While suggesting a scheme of democratic decentralization for the effective implementation of the Community Development Programme in rural India, the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee visualized a very prominent place for the collector as the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad at the District level. In fact, in states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka where the District level tier of Panchayati

35 S D. Srivatsava, The Role of Collector in Development Administration in Rajasthan, Indian School of Public Administration, New Delhi, 1965, p 31
Raj is conceived purely as a co-ordinating and supervisory body, it is the District Collector that presides over 'Zilla Parishad'. At the other end of the spectrum in Maharashtra, where the Zilla Parishad acts as the king pin of development administration, the Collector is kept outside the Panchayati Raj. Similarly, in Gujarat, where a powerful Zilla Parishad exists the Collector is not deeply involved in Panchayati Raj even though he is an associate member of the Zilla Parishad.\(^{39}\)

However, the initial successes in Panchayati Raj during the early sixties soon gave way to disappointment starting from the mid-sixties a number of committees went into the problem of re-organising the District Administration with a view to increase the effectiveness of the Rural Development Programmes. Naturally the collector's position vis-a-vis the Rural Development Administration received a prominent place in the proposals of all such Committees. Interestingly enough, while some committees proposed total exclusion of the Collector from the Rural Development Administration, some others were aimed at further strengthening the hands of the collector in respect of development administration.

The Andhra Pradesh Administrative Reforms Commission (1964-65), which favoured a complete separation of Development work from the revenue and regulatory work felt "what the District Collector can guide the Panchayati Raj institutions better by remaining outside than by being in them"\(^{40}\). The Estimates Committee of Andhra Pradesh legislature, on the other hand, favoured the Subordination of the revenue collector along with the other District officials.

\(^{39}\) S P Ranga Rao, and K V L N Sastrarama Sarma, District Collector and Development Administration - Some Recent Developments in Andhra Pradesh Administration, 1982-83 P.329

of all Development departments to the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad 41

A District Revenue Officer from IAS cadre was appointed for each District to provide him relief on the revenue side. To strengthen his position in Development Administration certain important powers of the Heads of the Department at the State level were decentralised and placed in the hands of the Collector. Thus, even though the democratic nature of Development administration at the District level received a set-back, for the first time after Independence, the collector emerged as the unchallenged captain of the team of District Development Officers because of his powers as the Head of these departments 42

In a way the Zilla Development Boards may be described as gill-born, as the chairman, Zilla Parishads never cooperated with the collectors in their functioning. Criticism was heard openly in the political circles that the Boards were the result of an official conspiracy to reverse the policy of democratic decentralisation.

The High power Committee on Panchayati Raj 1972 (popularly known as the Narasimham Committee) also proposed that the collector should be kept out of Zilla Parishad. The Committee mentioned some important reasons for its recommendation. Firstly, the collector who is responsible for elections to Panchayati Raj bodies, should not be directly associated with their administration. Secondly, the collector should not involve himself in Panchayati Raj administration as he is responsible for the selection of District cadre posts, as the chairman of the District Selection committees. Thirdly, as another senior


42 S P. Ranga Rao, and K.V.L.N. Seetaram Sarma, Op Cit, p 331
officer of the IAS cadre will be there to look after Development Administration, the collector should be free to pay full time attention to his traditional functions of law and order, revenue administration, and general executive duties like election, civil supplies, floods, droughts, inspections and the like. However, in the interest of co-ordination the committee wanted a statutory provision under which the chairman of Zilla Parishad and the collector shall meet regularly, once in a month to discuss matters of mutual interest and come to agreed solutions. In case of difference of opinion, the matter should be referred to the Government by either of them. Thus, the ghost of the Zilla Development Boards appears to have hunted the committee in bringing together, the chairman of Zilla Parishad and the District collector. In any case, it is recognition of the importance of the collector as the chief agent of the Government at the District level, irrespective of his involvement in Rural Development administration.

The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Samithis and Zilla Parishads Act was finally amended in 1976, through which the administrative machinery in Zilla Parishad was considerably strengthened. Thus the Act proved for the appointment of a powerful chief executive officer, while excluding the collector from the membership of the Zilla Parishad. However, the powers and functions which the collector discharged as the agent of the Government were retained with him.

Meanwhile, the Mid-seventies have seen the collector assuming the responsibility for the administration of special rural development programmes, such as, the Small Farmers Development Agency, the Integrated Rural Development Programme and the Drought Prone Area Programme. In fact, after

43 Government of Andhra Pradesh, Reports of the High Power Committee on Panchayati Raj, Hyderabad, 1972, p 43

44 Ibid, p 46
the supersession of the Panchayati Raj institutions in 1976, the collectors were functioning as special officers of the Zilla Parishads. On the revenue side, they were assisted by the Joint Collectors. Thus between 1976 and 1981, the bureaucracy at the District level headed by the Collector was completely in charge of the Development programmes.

Andhra Pradesh Government appointed another committee on Panchayati Raj, again under the chairmanship of Narasimham in 1979, "to review the structure, power and functions of Panchayati Raj, with a view to strengthen their administration. The committee proposed that the District Collector should be kept out of development administration. They even proposed that the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad should be made the chairman of agencies like SFD A, D P A P and I R D P. However, the committee wanted the collector to exercise certain powers as the agent of the Government. Thus, he could call for any information or record from the Panchayati Raj bodies. It was also suggested that the District Collector should be invited to the meetings of the subject committees and the general body at the Zilla Parishad, in the interest of coordination. Further the administrative reports, statements of accounts of the Zilla Parishad should be sent to the Government only through the collector. Thus, the Committee wanted the collector to be mainly outside development administration and devote his full attention to regulatory functions like law and order, civil supplies.  

However, in a surprise move, the Government of Andhra Pradesh had second thoughts about the position of the collector in Zilla Parishad and got the Act amended in November, 1981. In the words of the Government "it was considered that in view of the prominent position of the District collector, he

should be closely associated with the affairs of the Zilla Parishad. There will be unity of command and proper coordination and expert guidance to the standing committees by making the collector the chairman of all standing committees of the zilla parishad. The amendment also provided for the constitution of District Planning Boards for each District under the chairmanship of minister representing the District nominated by the Government, along with 15 other members. The District Collector was made the member-secretary of the board, while the chairman, Zilla parishad, was to be its ex-officio vice chairman. The Government has also made the collector, the chairman of the District selection committee in place of the Chairman, Zilla Parishad. Thus, the District Collector was once again brought to the centre of the stage in respect of Panchayati Raj institutions. However, this time the presence of another senior IAS officer as the District Development Officer. 46 Under whom all the officers of the development departments are placed, is a serious limitation to the supremacy of the collector at the District level.

The role of coordination in the sphere of development is assigned to the collector not in all states but mainly in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. With the formation of Zilla Parishad and Mandal Panchayat under the new statute in Karnataka, the District Development board has become redundant. The Andhra Pradesh panchayat samithies and Zilla Parishads Act 1969 was amended on January 22, 1987 to provide for a modified three tier system of Democratic Decentralisation consisting of a village panchayat, Mandal Praja Parishad and Zilla Praja Parishad.

46 The amending Act of 1981 Changed the Designation of the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad and made him the District Development Officer.
The reforms carried out to the Developmental set-up in Andhra Pradesh in 1987, have brought into being a new body called the "Zilla Abhivruddhi Sameeksha Mandal" (District development review board) equivalent to the District Planning and Development board in some states, under the chairmanship of a minister and the collector is made its ex-officio secretary. The collector is relieved of his erstwhile responsibilities regarding the Zilla Parishad 47.

The collector as the head of the District, has to play a dominant role in the implementation of Development programmes for which he should be given the necessary authority and status. Senior member of the IAS may be appointed District Collector. They will have both rich administrative experience and full command over the District and Subordinate officers. When Sri C Rajagopalachari was chief minister of the then Madras State, very senior IAS Officers functioned as collectors and they contributed much to the efficiency of the District 48.

This enormous increase in the powers of the District collector made the administration more and more irresponsible and did not satisfy the aspirations of a free people. Even after independence the successive governments did not do much to make the administration responsible and to bring it to the doorsteps of people. It is left to Telugu Desam Party Government to introduce fundamental changes in the District Administrative set up.

Sri N T Rama Rao, the celluloid and matinee idol hero, who entered politics in 1982 and founded Telugu Desam Party came to power with a massive mandate in 1983. He has a flair for drama and whatever he does he induces an aura of theatrics in it. Despite strong opposition from different quarters, he introduced two important reforms in the District administration introduction.

47 S.N.Sadasivan, Op Cit, p 34
48 Ibid, p 80
of Mandal system and abolition of age old of hereditary system of village officers 49

Mandal system was introduced with the objective of bringing administration to the doorsteps of the people and to solve the problems of the poorest of the poor. The taluks were revenue units of administration middle tier in the District administrative setup, the basic unit happens to be the village. The Telugu Desam Government abolished the taluks and in their place Revenue Mandals are formed. There were 315 taluks in Andhra Pradesh, which were replaced by 1104 revenue mandals. In the place of 380 panchayat Samithis 1092 Mandal Parishads were formed. As the area of the Mandal is very compact and small, administration will be effective and serve its purpose. Ordinarily, the headquarters of the Mandal will be centrally located which will be provided with Primary Health Centre, Veterinary Hospital, Bank, Primary Co-operative Society, Marketing facilities, Police Station, Junior College, Sub-treasury, extension centres. As such, the people there need not go for of long distances for their work—all the facilities are available for the villagers at short distances. The creation of Mandal system facilities the development of semi-urban places and prevents the migration of rural people to the big cities and towns the most important beneficial consequence of the system 50.

In Andhra Pradesh for Panchayat Elections in 1995, 16 per cent of Gram Panchayats were reserved for Scheduled caste candidates, 5 per cent Scheduled tribes, 34 per cent Backward castes and one third of the candidates elected from every category should be women. The census figures contain the population of SC, ST and women down to the Gram Panchayat level, but there is no enumeration of population belonging to BCs. So, that the Government selected


50 Ibid., p 3
the Gram Panchayats to be reserved for BCs on the basis of lottery. However, 900 writs were filed in the A.P. High Court challenging the procedure.

Government of Andhra Pradesh conducted Gram Panchayats Election on June 24, 27, 30 and July 3, 1995. Out of total 20,224, Gram Panchayat, 20 percent Gram Panchayats were elected unanimously Chittoor District had maximum number of Gram Panchayats 1425 and lowest number in Khammam District as 393 The elections are conducted on non-party basis Under State Election Commission direction, the Sarpanch has to spend maximum amount of Rs 10,000 and ward member around Rs 2,500 only.

Panchayats elections are fought bitterly even now in villagers where the Sarpanch post is not reserved. In some villages unreserved candidates spent up Rs 10 lakhs on campaign whereas it was stipulated as ten thousands. When panchayats reserved for women under general category wives have become their inevitable choice. In Tribal belt, in a hamlet called Varnakula Thanda in Ramakuppam Mandal of Chittoor District, a Telugu Desam Party candidate Mubu Naik, a naughty fellow, won with a single vote. This was because the village boycotted the poll, but the contesting candidate himself cast his vote just before close of poll.

In Chittoor District there are 1,295 Gram Panchayats with the requests of the villages these number was increased by the notification issued by the District Collector to 1995 Gram Panchayati elections. Now there are 1425 Gram Panchayats in Chittoor District. Among them 41 are notified panchayats. The new Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Sri N. Chandrababu Naidu and his Cabinet passed a resolution in September, 1995 for the merger of Gram Panchayats and Revenue villages for administrative comfort, in Andhra Pradesh.

The Chittoor District is divided into 65 mandal parishads which is the highest number in the state. The head of the Mandal is Mandal Development Officer, who is the in-charge-officer of the developmental works of the Mandal. The people of the particular Mandal elect president, their representative who is non-official to look after the developmental works. Before 1995, the mandal parishad president was elected by direct election, whereas now he is elected indirectly by the members of Mandal Parishad territorial constituencies. Chittoor district the fifth place in Andhra Pradesh has 791 Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituencies (MPTCs). These MPTCs in turn are divided on the population basis. These Mandal territorial constituencies are 11 in Nager Mandal Parishad, the highest number in the Chittoor Division with the total of 241, is in Tirupati Division. Tirupati Mandal Parishad with its 23 members is the highest in 180 and in Madanapalli division Kuppam Mandal Parishad is having 23 members is the highest in 370 members. Out of 791 Mandal Parishad territorial constituencies, the result of 1 MPTC is Paddapanjani Mandal was not yet announced as per the directions of state election commission, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.

From each Mandal Parishad one Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency member was elected according to 1994 Panchayati Raj Act.

These ZPTC members elect Zilla Parishad Chairman. The Reservation was followed for ZPTC members in Chittoor District as detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Reservation</th>
<th>Number of ZPTCs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unreserved</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SC (Women)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>BC</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>BC (Women)</td>
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</table>
The Standing Committees in Zilla Parishad are formed according to New Panchayati Raj Act 1994

1. **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PLANNING AND FINANCE**

In this Committee, one co-opted member and members are MLA's in the total of 12 members. Zilla Parishad Chairman is Chairman of the Committee.

2. **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

In this committee, there are one cooptive member and 2 MLA's and 9 other ZPTC Members are members in this committee. Zilla Parishad Chairman is the Chairman of the committee.

3. **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE**

There are 1 M P, 2 MLA's, 8 other ZPTC members and Vice-chairman of Zilla Parishad is a member and the chairman of the committee. The Zilla Parishad Chairman is ex-officio member in the committee.

4. **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION AND MEDICAL SERVICES**

In these committees, 3 MLA's, 9 other ZPTC Members are the members in the Committee.

5. **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR WOMEN WELFARE**

In these committees, Smt. J. Seetha Lakshmi, ZPTC member is the chairperson. 1 M P, 1 MLA and 9 other ZPTC Members are members of the committee. The ZP Chairman is the ex-officio member in the committee.

6. **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE**
In this committee there are 2 MLA's, 1 MP and 9 ZPTC members are members Smt K Ramadevi is the chairperson, ZP Chairman is Ex-officio member in the committee

7. STANDING COMMITTEE FOR WORKS

In this committee the ZP Chairman acts as a chairman of the committee 2 MLA's and 10 Z P T C Members are the members of the Committee

The District Collector is the permanent invitee for Zilla Parishad meetings

At present there is a three tier Panchayat Raj set up in the State of Andhra Pradesh at the village level the Gram Panchayat, at the mandal level the mandal parishad and at District level Zilla Parishad. The Gram Panchayats are governed according 1964 Gram Panchayat Act, 1986 Zilla Praja Parishad, Mandal Praja Parishad and Zilla Pranali and Abhivrudhi Sameeksha Mandals Act. The Andhra Pradesh local bodies Electoral Reforms Act, 1989

While so, the constitution (seventy third Amendment) Act, 1992 has been passed by the parliament with a view mainly to strengthen and revitalize the Panchayat Raj bodies so that they can subserv the needs of the teeming millions that live in the rural areas. 52