

**STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT STAFF AT
DISTRICT AND LOWER LEVELS, 1968**

1. The Study

There has been a feeling that there is a great deal of staff on ground in rural administration which are neither well organised nor their activities well co-ordinated. With this background, the Programme Evaluation Organisation, at the instance of Planning Commission took up a study of the pattern of development staff at the district and lower levels in order to ascertain the strength of different categories of personnel located at various operational levels in the district. The main feature of the study was to enumerate the present strength of staff at the district, block and village levels in the different development departments.

2. Objectives

i) To enumerate the present strength of the staff in different development departments including Panchayati Raj Institutions and other private agencies like Khadi and Village Industry Commission, Handloom Board and Social Welfare Board, etc. at the district, block and village levels;

ii) To know about duplication and divergence in the functions of different functionaries and overlapping in the schemes as executed by the same department or by different departments. Problems of coordination both inter departmental and intra-departmental were also studied.

iii) To study the development budget and its utilisation for each district development office.

3. Sample Size

The Study was conducted in 16 States and one Union Territory (Himachal Pradesh) covering 42 districts and equal number of blocks at the rate of one block in each district. Of the 42 Selected districts, 5 were covered under I.A.D.P. and I.A.A. Programme was in operation in other 21 districts. Among the selected blocks 16 belonged to post stage II Category. The Selection of Sample at different level was purposive.

4. **Reference Period**

Relevant information was collected for the year 1967-68.

5. **Main Findings**

1. It was observed that there **had been a steady** growth of staff in the development departments like agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperation, etc. to keep up with the rising tempo of developmental activity during the plan periods. In addition, the new departments of **community** development and Panchayati Raj Institutions like Zila Prishad etc. had also added substantial staff at various levels. The organisational set up in the selected distts., however, showed a wide variation in staff strength. 24 Parganas distt. in West Bengal reported as high a staff strength as 6,064 while Jodhpur district in Rajasthan and Bilaspur district in Himachal Pradesh reported the lowest staff numbering 522 and 423 respectively.

2. On an average, two thirds of the total budget was found to have been spent on development items in majority of the districts. In 10 of 42 selected districts, the development component was more than 75%. only in 3 districts, 1 each in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the budget constituted a little less than 50% of the total district budget. Under-utilisation of development funds was reported by all the selected districts. About 50% of the schemes reported under utilisation of funds. The most common cause for under utilisation of funds was found to be late allotment of funds and procedural delays.

3. Under the Social Services programme, medical and health facilities are the most important felt need of the people in the country. The present position with regard to availability of medical personnel and expenditure incurred on medical and health services varied from district to district. on an average one medical or paramedical person (including nurses, midwives, compounders etc.) was available for every 3000 persons. In about 30% of the selected districts, one medical functionary was attending to more than 4000 persons. In 30% of the districts the amount spent on medical and health services was much less than Rs.1000 for every 1000 of population, while in 50% of the districts the amount spent was roughly Rs.2000 for every 1000 of population. only in five districts the amount spent was Rs.4000 for every 1000 population.

4. The working of the C.D Programme in Andhra Pradesh deserves a special mention. In contrast to the classification elsewhere in the country, the blocks in the State were found to have been delimited into the larger units in order to bring about a reduction in the number of staff and over head expenses. These blocks covered an area of 300 to 500 square miles and with population of 1.00 to 1.50 lakhs. The Block budget mostly consisted of the transferred funds of the development departments.

5. In Madhya Pradesh the post of Block Development Officer was abolished in 1965. The District Collectors, SDO and Tehsildar were entrusted with the responsibilities for development work. The Block Extension Officers were put under direct supervision and control of the respective District Officers.

6. The staff of Social Education was abolished in Mysore, U.P., Rajasthan and West Bengal, while the staff of Rural Industries was withdrawn from the Blocks in the States of Punjab, UP, Rajasthan and West Bengal. The reduction in staff was affected mainly due to **tight** financial position of the State Govts.

7. ' The Khadi and Village Industries Programme presented an illustration of over-lapping. In Punjab and Haryana, four offices of different departments, viz. District Industries office; Khadi & Village Industries Board, Asstt. Registrar, Industrial Cooperatives; and District Welfare office, were granting loans and subsidies besides providing technical guidance for the promotion of Village and Khadi Industries.

8. Divergence in the functions of different functionaries to a-limited extent was reported in almost all the States. It was more pronounced in UP, Punjab, Haryana and Kerala.

6. **Major Suggestions**

1. Proper coordination among various concerned departments and agencies is, essential for effective implementation of development schemes. Agriculture departments in this regard is in a vulnerable position. Its success directly depends on the co-operation of other departments like irrigation, electricity board/hydel department and cooperatives.

2. The working of the staff during Post Stage II has not been organised satisfactorily. The problem was not that of lack of funds, but was also lack of efficiency of the block programme of soil testing, knowledge of recommended practice among participants, audio-visual publicity measures, training of farmers and disposal of surplus income at the farmers' level.