

## CHAPTER-V

# IMPROVEMENT IN DELIVERY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

### 5.1 Introduction :

Indian Planners and Policy makers have been emphasizing upon the need of Social Development ever since the beginning of planning process in the country. The final objective of social development in the country is to eradicate poverty and thus improving the quality of life of the people. However, despite a model growth in the economy, rural areas remained behind in the process of social development. The development of the country has remained concentrated in few sectors and in specific regions, which has created regional disparities and inequalities.

The Ministry of Rural Development spearheading the frontal attack on rural poverty and endeavoured to reach out to the last and most disadvantaged sections of society through its various programmes schemes Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Million Well Schemes (MWS), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) etc.

During the Eighth Five Year Plan, the emphasis was on building up of rural infrastructure priority for all weather roads, particularly in tribal, hill and desert areas, minor irrigation works and water harvesting structure schemes for soil conservation and social forestry. The Ninth Plan ultimate objective is to improve the living conditions of the poor and the various disadvantage section of the rural society. Priority is given to agriculture and rural development with a view to generating adequate productive employment and eradication of poverty. Ensuring food and nutritional security for all, particularly the vulnerable sections of the society. The focus also stressed environmental sustainability of the development process through social mobilisation and participation of people at all levels, empowerment of women and socially

disadvantaged groups such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other backward classes and developing peoples, participatory institutions like Panchayati Raj Institutions and self-help groups.

Development Administration implements the above programmes/schemes/laws either directly through the Departments i.e. the Department of Education, Health, Civil Supply etc. undertake their work departmentally and have strongly from the villages, blocks, districts to State and National levels. Many Departments have set up the Autonomous Corporations/Boards or Agencies to facilitate flexibility such as Housing Corporation, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Corporation, Women Development Corporation, Welfare Board etc. In order to enable the administration to interact meaningfully with voluntary agencies and non-officials. The administration also takes the help of several other bodies to carry out its works. It promotes several local level organisations such as Mahila Mandal, Youth Mandal to bring about the people's involvement at the field level. It also involves various cooperative bodies like Cooperative Credit/Multipurpose Societies as well as Financial Institutions in the implementation of the Development Programmes/Schemes.

The Planning Commission appointed a Committee to review the existing administrative arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes during the 7th Plan. The Committee submitted its report in December, 1985. The Union Government went further in holding meetings with district officers to understand directly, what weaknesses affected developmental force at the district level and below. The review committee concluded that "It is high time that a radical departure is made and the reliance in the feudal and the colonial structures done away with. It found that there were far too many Government functionaries at the district level. The Block Development Officers had become ineffective and the credibility of the organization has been eroded considerably. The programmes at the grass root level are still being managed by the Block Office, the village level worker and the Panchayat Sevaks.

The major area of failure of the developmental administration is well known today. It

has been observed that the policies of the Government are not responsive to the needs of the poor. The priorities of the poor are frequently ignored, the nature of the exact needs are not assessed properly and the requirements are not met within a comprehensive time frame.

## **5.2. Providing Responsive Administration in the field :**

The Role of Public Administration in the initial stages was limited to basic functions of the maintenance of law and order in the country. With the introduction of the Development Planning it was felt that the administration will have to undertake more responsibilities in the area of development. Therefore it was felt that the administration should acquire some extra features such as flexibility, innovativeness and people oriented stance to undertake the new responsibilities.

## **5.3 Administrative problems and priorities :**

It has been acknowledged that the Development Administration has not changed from the days of Community Development. The weakness at the level of BDO as the Captain of the team of the functionaries at the Block level has proved to be critical factor. In early days of Community Development, Young IAS Officers and few members of the State Civil Services managed the Pilot projects. On the basis of that experience, the National Extension Service Blocks were opened all over the country. Side by side the duties and the responsibilities of the BDO increased and became more complex. This is evident from the fact that in the 50s and 60s and N.E.S. Blocks had a schematic budget of only Rs. 12.00 lakhs spread over a period of Ten years. Now every year a block on an average has access to financial resources of the order of Rs. 1.00 crore.

Considering the pivotal position of the BDO in the Development Administration, the upgradation of the post of BDO and appointing the able and dedicated persons to those posts should not be made any further delay. Democratic Decentralisation will make it all the necessary to have BDOs of a better calibre because the Panchayat bodies will badly need their support for responsive development administration. Young IAS Officers after completion of their training should spend about two years

as BDOs. Young and experience persons of State Civil Services could be filled up by appointing on contract basis for 3 to 5 years with bright young pass out of the Indian Institute of Management and Indian Institute of Technology.

#### **5.4 The Singhvi Committe Report :**

The Planning Commission appointed the Committee to review the existing administrative arrangement for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes during the 7th Plan. The Committee submitted its report in December, 1985. The Union Department of Rural Development also received a concept paper on Panchayati Raj from Singhvi Committee. Through a full report on the restructuring the Panchayat system, the Review Committee concluded that the Block Development Officers had become ineffective.'

India's Development Administration typically presents the evils of a supervisory regime within a highly centralised system. The primary unit such as VLW and BDO are left no option but to cater to the needs of supervisory authorities. This load of supervision made must be reduced drastically. The District level meetings have a common factor that almost the same set of administrative staff have to attend. Apart from wastage of staff time in meetings and paper work. There is tendency to remain busy with supervisory works that keeps the local level functionaries always in arrears in implementing the works assigned to them. It is necessary that the system is changed and the whole range of development responsibility is consigned to one single authority. Development and Law and Order can no longer work in isolation. A minimum level of security is necessary for development to yield results. Finally, representative system control is a must for responsiveness in development administration. Thus a comprehensive view of the unit of administration at the intermediate level is called for. This should be supplemented with a new design of administrative integration at that level.

Absence of a competent planning authority is also responsible for poor performance of the programmes. Several Committees have reported on Panchayati Raj and Block/

## District Planning and administration.

A commendable attempt in this direction was made by the late Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi and evolved a framework of Responsive Administration and participated in each of the five regional Workshops. The consensus, which emerged from this discussion, is recorded in the discussion paper on "Panchayati Raj and District Planning". The consensus represents a very balanced view on the issues involved in this bold experiment to entrust decision making both in the field of planning and administration of district development, to the elected representatives of the local people. The discussion paper says "As a generalised Model, we are in favour of a United representative body to take charge of all aspects of Planning, Execution and Monitoring at the District level. This will be the Zilla Parishad suitably composed to include representatives of Municipalities and cities also members of Legislature (State and Central) belonging to the district Presidents of major Cooperative Institutions of Voluntary Agency with reserved seats for women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. This body will have a Chief Executive Officer assisted by various departmental heads drawn from the line departments of the State Government. The Chief Executive Officer would be assisted by a specialised cell which will be headed by a planning officer and consists of specialists from other field like Economics, Statistics, Regional Planning, Sociology and Cartography". The proposed structure combines all the elements essential for good planning. People's participation through elected representatives and Voluntary agencies, professional competence and responsive administration. However in most of the States, the District Planning Offices were not constituted as per the guidelines of the Planning Commission.

### **5.5. Existing Administrative Structure :**

The development activities have become numerous and many committees and organisations at different levels are set up. It is necessary for district collector to chair all such committees with enormous responsibilities of maintaining Law and Order. One of the crucial questions being debated in the Country is the reorganisation of the district administration which is currently headed by Collector for the last 100 years. Entire plan documents from the second plan onwards are

lamenting the fact that the lack of coordination at the district level between different functionaries is a source of a major handicap. This is to make sure that there is a competent structure of administration for effective implementation of the programme.

## **5.6 Strengthening Decentralised Planning :**

With the recommendation of the Government of India in 1984, the State Governments constituted the District Planning and Development Boards to provide necessary guidelines and direction to district planning units and to approve the district plan prepared by the planning units. The board consisted of the Minister in charge as Chairman, the District Collector as vice-chairman and other members, viz all MPs, and MLAs representing the district, all sub-divisional officers (civil), all chairman of block samitys in the district, one representative of planning department, district level heads of department, district head of lead bank and presidents of all municipal committees. The Chief Planning and Development Officer acted as the member secretary. The district planning unit is comprised of the Chief Planning and Development Officer, an economist, a planning officer, a credit planning officer and other supporting staff. Despite all these steps, real planning could not take place in most states.

The Constitution 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts, 1992 :

The Constitution 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts, 1992 have taken up new steps to strengthen decentralised planning process in the country. It is hoped that decentralized planning will get a material shape by the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act. The Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 provides for A DPC.

### **Article 243 ZD enjoins :**

- (1) There shall be Constituted in every State at the district level a DPC to consolidate the plans prepared by the Panchayats and the municipalities in the district and to prepare the drafts development plan for the district as a whole.

- (2) The Legislature of a State may by law make provision with respect to :
- a) the composition of the District Planning Committee
  - b) the manner in which the seats in such Committees shall be elected by and from amongst, the elected members of the Panchayat at the district level and of the municipalities in the district in proportion to the ratio between the population of the rural areas and of the urban areas in the district.
  - c) the functions relating to district planning which may be assigned to such committees.
  - d) the manner in which the Chairpersons of such Committees shall be chosen.
- 3) Every District Planning Committees shall in preparing the drafts development plan :
- a) have agreed to -
    - i) matters of common interest between the Panchayats and the municipalities including spatial planning, sharing of water and other physical and natural resources, the integrated development of infrastructure and environmental conservation ;
    - ii) the extent and type of available resources whether financial or otherwise;
  - b) consult such institutions and organizations as the governor may, by order, specify.

### **5.7 The West Bengal initiative :**

In accordance with the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act 1992, the Government of West Bengal enacted the West Bengal District Planning Committee Act, 1994 (the date of enactment is May 3, 1994). The preamble of the Act specified that this enactment has been made to provide for the constitution of District Planning Committee (DPC) at the district level for consolidation of the plans prepared by the Panchayat bodies and the municipalities in the district and preparation of draft development plan for the district as a whole.

#### **5.7.1 Composition of DPCs in West Bengal :**

The DPC act specifically delineated three categories of members for the District Planning Committee (section 3 of the Act). These are :

- (i) Members to be elected by and from amongst the elected members of the Zilla Parishad (ZP). However, Sabhadhipati (head of ZP) would not come in the purview of this section.
- (ii) Members to be elected by and from amongst the elected members of all the municipalities under the jurisdiction of the district and in the case of Siliguri subdivision of Darjeeling district, where there is Siliguri Subdivision Planning Committee, members of all the municipalities within this subdivision. Here also the condition is that the chairpersons of the municipalities cannot be the members under this section, i.e. subsection 2 (b) of section 3 of the Act.
- (iii) Members to be appointed by the State government, but the total number of such members should not exceed one-fifth of the total number of members of DPC. Regarding the members of this category, the DPC Act specifically mentions that the State government will appoint Sabhadhipati of Zilla Parishad and District Magistrate (DM) of the district as members of the committee where the Sabhadhipati will be the chairperson of the DPC and DM the secretary of DPC. For selecting members of this category, the DPC Act mentions five areas. These are :
  - a) Sabhapatis of the Panchayat Samitis (block level) of the district ;
  - b) The Members of the House of People and the Legislative Assembly of the State elected from the district but not holding any portfolio in the Ministry ;
  - c) Officers of the State government or any undertakings of the State government having specialized knowledge in the field ;



- d) The chairpersons of the municipalities of the district and in the case of Siliguri subdivision, within that subdivisions ;
- e) Economists and social and political workers of eminence.

According to the provision of the Act, the Government of West Bengal by notification determined the number of members of each DPC and the subdivisions planning committee (for Siliguri subdivision). The composition pattern of these Planning Committee is presented in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1**  
**Composition of District Planning Committees in West Bengal**

District	Members on the basis of subsection 2 (a)	Members on the basis of subsection 2 (b)	Members on the basis of subsection 2 (c)	Total
Coochbehar	22	2	6	30
Jalpaiguri	22	1	6	32
Uttar Dinajpur	16	2	4	22
Dakshin Dinajpur	13	1	3	17
Malda	28	2	7	37
Murshidabad	45	3	12	60
Nadia	29	5	8	60
North 24 Parganas	25	19	11	42
South 24 Parganas	46	2	12	60
Howrah	19	9	7	35
Hooghly	27	9	9	35
Midnapur	74	6	20	100
Purulia	38	2	10	50
Bankura	41	3	11	55
Burdwan	36	12	12	60

Birbhum	35	3	9	47
Total	519	81	147	747

Source : Govt. of West Bengal.

For Siliguri subdivision Planning Committee, the total number of members has been fixed at 10, where the number of subsection 2 (a) members is 5, subsection 2 (b) members 3 and subsection 2(c) members 2.

This composition pattern of DPCs demonstrates that all elected people's representatives in a district do not have automatic inclusion in the committee by virtue of their posts. For example, in the districts, there are 656 ZP members of whom 519, i.e. 79.11 percent are to be included in DPCs. Again, excluding the hill areas of Darjeeling district, there are 332 Panchayat Samitis which means that all Sabhapatis have no chance to be included in DPCs, because the total members under subsection 2 (c) of section 3 will be only 147. Similarly, all MLAs and MPs of this State have no scope to get a berth in DPCs of their respective districts (Table 5.2).

**Table - 5.2**

**Number of Zilla Parishad Members, Sabhapatis of Panchayat Samitis, MLAs and MPs in West Bengal.**

District	ZP Members	Sabhapatis	MLAs	MPs
Coochbehar	24	12	9	1
Jalpaiguri	26	13	12	2
Uttar Dinajpur	18	9	7	1
Dakshin Dinajpur	14	8	5	1
Malda	30	15	19	3
Murshidabad	52	26	15	2
Nadia	34	17	15	2
North 24 Parganas	44	22	28	4

South 24 Parganas	58	29	25	4
Howrah	28	14	16	2
Hooghly	36	18	19	3
Midnapur	108	54	37	5
Purulia	40	20	11	1
Bankura	44	22	13	2
Burdwan	62	31	26	4
Birbhum	38	19	12	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>39</b>

Source : Govt. of West Bengal.

### 5.7.2 Crucial Features of West Bengal DPC Act 1994 :

The composition pattern of DPCs and the number of people's representatives at different levels amply demonstrate that representation of each and every segment of the people through their representatives in DPCs is not possible. In the earlier arrangements in the State (since the beginning of the Seventh Five Year Plan in 1985-86), at the district level, there were two committees for finalizing and approving the district Plan - District Planning Committee where the Sabhadhipati of the Zilla Parishad was the chairperson and District planning and Co-ordination Council (DPCC) where a minister (from the district or from another district if the district had no minister) of the State government was the chairperson. The heads of different standing committees of Zilla Parishad, Sabhapatis of Panchayat Samitis of the district and the chairperson of all the municipalities within the district were the members of both committees. In addition, all MLAs and MPs of the district were made the members of DPCC. All district heads of the government departments were also made members of both the committees. Inclusion of the Minister, all MLAs and MPs of the district in the highest planning body at the district level was found to be advantageous as this would enable establishing effective linkage with the district and the State. It can be said that the earlier system of district planning in the State ensured total representation of the people in the district planning bodies.

The type of exclusion resulted due to the present DPC Act may create bottlenecks in the implementation of the schemes approved by DPC. For example,

a Panchayat Samiti whose Sabhapati was not included in DPC may find that DPC extends approval to such a scheme which is not that much urgent for implementation. The immediate effect of non-implementation will be the escalation of scheme costs and withholding of fund at the Panchayat Samiti level without any expenditure (the second problem would come up when funds are released for implementation). In the existing administrative arrangements as at the subdistrict level, blocks are the main implementing agencies; inclusion of Sabhapatis of the Panchayat Samitis in DPC (formed after 74th Amendment to the Constitution) is keenly felt. This will ensure effective interaction between the implementing agencies and the planning authority.

Under the West Bengal DPC Act 1994, a District Planning Committee after preparing the draft development plan for the district as a whole shall forward the draft to the State Government (Planning and Development Dept). On the receipt of the draft plan the State government in consultation with the State planning Board (SPB) will extend approval to the draft plan. In the earlier arrangement, DPCC had to send the plan and the resolution of the meeting to the SPB. With regard to the approval of the schemes of value above Rs. 5 lakh and schemes involving more than one district for implementation to SPB for final clearance. This testifies that in the earlier arrangement there was direct relationship in between the district and the SPB at the State Level. The department does not come in between. Intervention of the department in between the SPB and the DPC by virtue of the DPC Act, 1994 may lead to wastage of time (due to bureaucratic hurdles) in the process as there is no specific mention of the time period by which the department should clear the draft plan. Planning is a dynamic subject where it is necessary that agencies associated with the formulation, approval and implementation of the plan should have sufficient flexibility and dynamism. The State department may come as the facilitator only in the process, but not as a specific intermediary in the process of plan approval. Further, no need to be mentioned that at the State level there is not to interact with the State policy-makers. It is suggested that a State Development Council (SDC) may be formed with the Chief Minister as the Chairperson and the Minister in charge of Planning as the Vice-Chairperson. All chairpersons of the DPCs will be members of this Council. This Council will act in line with the National Development Council (NDC). Relationship of the Planning Commission and NDC may be replicated in the case of defining the relationship of the SPB and SDC,.

With the passage of the Seventy-Third Amendment Act, the Panchayati Raj

institutions were conferred Constitutional status. Again, the Seventy-Fourth Amendment Act made provision for the setting up of DPC for each district. Thus at the district level, there are now two constitutional bodies. This may lead to some operational problems. For example, the priority of Zilla Parishad may differ from that of the DPC - the scheme approved by the DPC may not get the same importance as given by Zilla Parishad of the district. As a result, the programme implementation will suffer leading to deadlocks. For avoiding this situation, the Govt. of West Bengal made zilla Parishad Sabhadhipati the Chairperson of DPC.