



Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Social Sciences

BPAC-134

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AT STATE AND DISTRICT LEVELS

*Administrative
System*

“शिक्षा मानव को बन्धनों से मुक्त करती है और आज के युग में तो यह लोकतन्त्र की भावना का आधार भी है। जन्म तथा अन्य कारणों से उत्पन्न जाति एवं वर्गगत विषमताओं को दूर करते हुए मनुष्य को इन सबसे ऊपर उठाती है।”

— इन्दिरा गाँधी



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“Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances.”

— Indira Gandhi



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STATE AND DISTRICT LEVELS**

**School of Social Sciences
Indira Gandhi National Open University**

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

The Course entitled “Administrative System at State and District Levels” aims to familiarise the learners with functioning of Indian administration at the state and district levels. “India, that is, Bharat” is a “Union of States”. The territory of India comprises the territories of 28 states and 8 union territories. Though development of the states in Indian Union can be traced back to the British rule in India, the foundation of state administration has been laid in the ancient times and continued in different periods of Indian History. An attempt has been made to trace the evolution of administration at the state and district levels. In India, administration operates within the framework of the Constitution. In this Course, study of administration at the state level necessitates an analysis of power entrusted to the State Government; and role of the Governor, Chief Minister, State Legislature and State Secretariat. The Course also includes patterns of relationship between the Secretariat and Directorates. In addition study deals, in detail, with State Secretariat; State Services and Public Service Commission; State Planning Board; State Finance Commission; State Election Commission; Lokayukta; and Judicial Administration. As the District Collector is the kingpin of administration, therefore her/his role and functions at the district level are described. It has been observed that citizens increasingly come in touch with administration in their daily life. In this context, Course focuses on the Panchayati Raj and Municipal Administration. The democratic governance and socio-economic development depend on the cooperative, cordial and harmonious relationship between the political leaders and administrators on the one hand; and on the other between the Government and citizens. At the end, emerging issues in administrative relationship between the Centre and States as well as the State and Local Government are discussed. This Course has been divided into following three Blocks and fourteen Units.

BLOCK 1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This is an Introductory Block titled “Historical Context” of Course BPAC-134 Administrative System at State and District Levels. As we have already discussed on evolution of Indian administration, in detail, in Block 1 from Unit 1-4 in Course BPAC-133, therefore in this Block we will concentrate on evolution of administration at the state and district levels.

Unit 1 State and District Administration: Evolution

Though development of the states in Indian Union can be traced back to the British rule in India, the foundation of state administration has been laid in the ancient times and continued in different periods of Indian History. The “District” as a unit of state administration has been in existence in the past; and all the succeeding imperial powers – the Guptas, the Mughals and the British invariably adopted the territorial pattern evolved by the Mauryas, and made the district indeed a sub-state. The District Administration has been one of the important institutional legacies bequeathed by the British to India. As a unit of administrative system, it has been a pivotal point of contact between the citizens and administration. The institution of District Collector was created as the pivot of administration. It combined the revenue, managerial and general administrative duties, but it was deemed to be absolutely essential for maintaining the British power, influence and authority throughout the country.

As we have already discussed about evolution of Indian Administration, in detail in Block 1 (BPAC-133), which is divided into four units, namely Unit 1 Ancient Administrative System, Unit 2 Medieval Administrative System, Unit 3 British System

and Unit 4 Continuity and Change in Indian Administration - Post 1947, therefore in this Unit we will describe the evolution of state and district administration in India. In addition, this Unit will focus on the Mauryan and Gupta Administration from the ancient period of Indian History, as they reflect the significant features of the contemporary administration. Further, Provincial Administration and District Administration during Mughal period will be described. In the last section, the State Executive, District Administration and evolution of District Collector's office during the British period will be explained to understand the background of the State and District Administration in India.

BLOCK 2 STATE AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

By now, you must be familiar with the evolution of the state and district administration. In this Block, we will study about the state, district and local administrative system in India. This is the second Block titled State and District Administration, which has twelve units. In this Block, we will study about the structure and functions of administration at the state and district levels. This will give us an idea about the various aspects of administration at the state and district levels. In India, local government in urban and rural areas, assume importance as it is responsible for implementation of policies, programmes, and also bringing people in contact with the administration.

Unit 2 Constitutional Profile of State Administration

India is a Union of states. The state is a very important constituent of our federal set up. This Unit will discuss the powers of the State Government and role of the Governor as the Constitutional Head of the State. It will also focus on the way the State Legislature functions and exercises control over administration. A discussion on the State Council of Ministers, its powers and functions; and the role of Chief Minister will be fruitful. The Unit will also examine the emerging trends in the division of powers between the Union and states.

Unit 3 State Secretariat: Organisation and Functions

The State Secretariat consists of various departments with Ministers and Secretaries as political and administrative heads respectively. This Unit will explain meaning, significance, role and functions of the Secretariat. It will give you an idea about the structure of typical Secretariat department. The relationship between the Secretariat department and the Heads of the Executive departments will be described. It will highlight the distinction between Secretariat Department and Executive Department and will try to determine whether they are distinct processes or a continuum. Keeping in view the important position occupied by the Chief Secretary in state administration, her/his role and functions will be emphasised in this Unit.

Unit 4 Patterns of Relationship between Secretariat and Directorates

Directorates are one of the types of executive agencies, which are responsible for execution of policies laid down by the Secretariat. This Unit will highlight the meaning, significance, role and organisation of Directorate. In addition, we will describe the types of Executive Agencies and Board of Revenue. The Unit will also deal with emerging patterns of relationship between Secretariat and Directorate. It will attempt to show how the functioning of the Secretariat affects the Directorates. It will bring out the factors responsible for shaping the Secretariat- Directorate relationship. Lastly, various approaches shaping the Secretariat-Directorate relationship, viz. Status-quo Approach, Amalgamation Approach and De-amalgamation Approach will be examined in this Unit.

Unit 5 State Services and Public Service Commission

State services are the civil services functioning at the state level. In this Unit, we will discuss the meaning of Civil Services, significance of independent recruitment agency and components of civil services at the state level. This Unit will highlight its classification as well as recruitment system. It enumerates the features of State Civil Services. In addition, explains the Constitutional provisions relating to the State Public Service Commission. Further, Unit will highlight its composition, functions and advisory role. There will also be a discussion on the independence of the Commission and its working.

Unit 6 State Planning Board

The State Planning Boards/State Planning Commissions were set up in most of the states. At the state level, it was felt that planning departments require advice and support of eminent subject-experts to introduce an element of specialised competence in the planning process. In this Unit, planning system at the state level has been described. As the subject of planning is mentioned in the Concurrent list of the Constitution of India, therefore planned development through systematic formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans is responsibility of the Centre and states. In view of above, as per 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission, the State Planning Boards should ensure that the district plans are integrated with the State plans, which are prepared by them. In this regard, the Commission emphasised on making it mandatory for all the states to prepare their development plans only after consolidating the plans of the local bodies. However, the position of Board and its effectiveness in the planning varies from state to state. In this Unit, keeping in view the significance of the State Planning Board (SPB) we will explain the composition and functions of the SPB at the state level with special reference to Kerala State Planning Board; and review the performance of SPBs in selected states. In addition, Unit will highlight necessary measures for strengthening and smooth functioning of the State Planning Board.

Unit 7 State Finance Commission

In a federal set up, biggest problem is to strike a balance of powers between the governments at various levels. Along with the balancing of functions and powers, there is a crucial issue of distribution of financial resources between the Union and other units of the government. Despite the elaborate and detailed constitutional provisions for the division of financial resources between the Union and States, Indian States face the problem of a continuous gap between their own resources and the expenditure pattern. With this view, our Constitutional makers were quite cautious on this account and provided for a Finance Commission under Article 280 to recommend mainly the financial transfers from the Union to states to reduce vertical as well as horizontal federal fiscal imbalance. This unit highlights a similar sort of arrangement in the sphere of State-local relations. The Local bodies, urban as well as rural have been suffering from paucity of funds. Basic reforms in the sphere of decentralised governance and empowering people through an elected local government assumed significance in early 1990s. Besides other measures and reforms, devolution of financial resources to these bodies was ensured through periodic constitution of the State Finance Commission under the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. In this Unit, we will concentrate on the origin, significance, composition, powers, functions and working of the State Finance Commission with special reference to the Punjab State Finance Commission.

Unit 8 State Election Commission

For a democratic polity, conduct of free, fair and impartial elections is considered to be

the most essential feature. India has the distinction of being the world's largest democracy. As you know, the Constitution of India under Article 324 has specifically provided for an independent Election Commission. After 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, a provision was made to set up the State Election Commission, to carry out activities related to supervision, direction and control of elections to the local bodies-Panchayats and Municipalities. In this Unit, we will be focusing on the significance, composition, powers and functions of the State Election Commission. In addition, Unit will highlight the need and role of Election Tribunal at the state level to take up election related disputes. Last but not least, study will examine the role of State Election Commission; and its impact on democratic governance at the grassroots level.

Unit 9 Lokayukta

The institution of the Lokpal at the Centre; and the Lokayukta at state level are established on the basis of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 to provide a uniform vigilance and anti-corruption road map for the nation. In this Unit we will discuss evolution, need and significance of the Lokayukta at the state level. It will emphasise on structural variations, at the state level. In addition, it will highlight on appointment, qualification, tenure, jurisdiction and functions of the Lokayukta. Further, role of the Lokayukta will be analysed. However, it has been observed that the recommendations of the Lokayukta are advisory and not binding on the state government. But the present times have witnessed the growing popularity of the institution of Lokayukta in states.

Unit 10 Judicial Administration

In a democracy, the primary objective of judicial system is to ensure citizen's rights. The administration has to function according to the law and Constitution. The judiciary has an important role in protecting the citizens against the arbitrary exercise of power. For successful working of democracy, we have Supreme Court at the top, High Court at the state, District Court at the district and Gram Nyayalaya (Village Court) at the local levels. In this Unit, we will discuss the judicial system in India. Further, the scope and forms of judicial control over administration, and limitations of judicial control over administration will be highlighted. Lastly, efforts will be made to bring out the recent trends in the judicial system.

Unit 11 District Collector

The institution of Collector is one of the significant offices in our country, which has evolved through ages to its present form. The Collector as head of the district administration occupies a very important place. In this Unit, we will study about the evolution of the office of District Collector and her/his functions. Since Independence, the Collector has been actively involved in the development programmes, which is more visible in the case of Panchayati Raj Institutions. However, after 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, the role of Collector in development administration has changed. Even then the District Collector appears to be the kingpin of the District administration. This Unit will also deal with the problems and constraints faced by the District Collector in discharge of her/his duties. In the end, we will discuss the suitable measures to mitigate these constraints.

Unit 12 Panchayati Raj

One of the important political developments in India, after Independence, was the introduction of Panchayati Raj. In this Unit, we will discuss the evolution of Panchayati Raj system in India, which was introduced on the basis of recommendations of Balwantrai

Mehta Committee. The study will focus on the three tier structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs); and significance of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The Unit will give you an idea about the power and functions of the PRIs. There will also be a discussion on the administrative structure and finance. It will examine the functioning of PRIs and highlight some recent developments.

Unit 13 Municipal Administration

The process of urbanisation has assumed importance in India. The urban local bodies have evolved and dealt with problems of urban development. This Unit will discuss the trends of urbanisation, meaning and classification of an urban area. An attempt will be made to explain the power, functions, role, administrative structure and finance of the Municipal Corporation, Municipal Council and Nagar Panchayat. In addition, it highlights recent trends in strengthening of these Bodies on the basis of 74th Constitutional Amendment.

BLOCK 3 EMERGING ISSUES

This is Block 3 of the Course on Administrative System at State and District Levels. This Block will give you an idea regarding relationship between the Centre and State Government; and State and Local Government.

Unit 14 Centre- State- Local Administrative Relations

In this unit, the nature of division of administrative powers and administrative relations between the Centre and states will be explained. In addition, it will focus on the administrative relations between the state and local government. It will highlight the financial relations among the centre, state and local governments, which is necessary for administrative functions. There are other extra-constitutional and formal devices for securing consultations between the centre and the states; and for bringing about co-operation and co-ordination between the states. These devices are to solve the centre-state conflicts and promote co-operative federalism, which will be emphasised. In this Unit, emergency provisions guiding Centre-State relations will be expressed. Lastly, relations between the Centre and States as well as the States and Local Government will be appraised.

BLOCK 1

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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UNIT 1 STATE AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: EVOLUTION*

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Mauryan and Gupta Period
 - 1.2.1 Provincial Administration
 - 1.2.2 Local Administration
- 1.3 Mughal Period
 - 1.3.1 Provincial Administration
 - 1.3.2 District Administration
- 1.4 British Period
 - 1.4.1 State Executive
 - 1.4.2 District Administration
 - 1.4.3 District Collector's Office
- 1.5 Conclusion
- 1.6 Glossary
- 1.7 References
- 1.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the roots of state administration in different phases of Indian history;
- Examine the development of state executive; and
- Describe the evolution of district administration.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As we all know “India, that is, Bharat” is a “Union of States”. The territory of India comprises the territories of states and union territories. Though development of the states in Indian Union can be traced back to the British rule in India, the foundation of state administration has been laid in the ancient times and continued in the different periods of Indian History.

The “District” as a unit of state administration has been in existence in the past; and all the succeeding imperial power – the Guptas, the Mughals and the British invariably adopted the territorial pattern evolved by the Mauryas, and made the district indeed a sub-state.

* Contributed by Dr. Pallavi Kabde, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, Telangana.

District Administration has been one of the important institutional legacies bequeathed by the British to India. As a unit of administrative system, it has been a pivotal point of contact between the citizens and administration. The institution of District Collector was created as the pivot of administration. It combined the revenue, managerial and general administrative duties, but it was deemed to be absolutely essential for maintaining the British power, influence and authority throughout the country.

As we have already discussed about evolution of Indian Administration in detail in Block 1 (BPAC-133), which is divided into four units, namely Unit 1 Ancient Administrative System, Unit 2 Medieval Administrative System, Unit 3 British System and Unit 4 Continuity and Change in Indian Administration - Post 1947, therefore in this unit we will briefly describe the evolution of state and district administration in India. The science of Politics and Government was much cultivated in ancient India. The first textbook dealing with the statecraft, Kautilya's Arthashastra, epic literature – the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana of Valmiki highlight the administrative machinery of the kingdoms. Numerous other treatises like Nitisara (Essence of Politics) of Kamandaka written during the Gupta period, and the Nitivakyamitram (Nectar of aphorisms on Politics) of Somadeva Suri, a Jaina writer of the tenth century provide interesting information on ancient Indian statecraft. In the subsequent section, we will discuss the Mauryan and Gupta Administration from the ancient period of Indian History, as they reflect the significant features of the contemporary administration.

1.2 MAURYAN AND GUPTA PERIOD

In this section, we shall discuss the Mauryan and Gupta Administration, from the ancient period of Indian History, as they reflect the following significant features of the administration.

1.2.1 Provincial Administration

The Kingdom was divided into provinces. The provincial Governor usually belonged to the royal family, and was appointed directly by the king. During Ashoka's rule, there were four Viceroyalties with headquarters at Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali and Suvarnagiri. The provincial Viceroys of the Mauryan Empire were generally assisted by the Council of Ministers, who were of the status of Mahamatras. The foreign rulers like the Indo-Greeks, Parthians, Sakas and the Kushanas borrowed the Achaemenian pattern of designating the provincial heads as Kshatrapas and Mahakshatrapas.

The Guptas changed the pattern of provincial setup. The Gupta emperors appointed the most competent person as Provincial Governor, known as the Uparika. Sometimes the provincial Governor seemed to be hereditary as the same family acted as Provincial Head under several rulers. Provinces had branches of almost all the departments working at the Centre. The category of provincial officials includes Kumaramatyaya (Chief Minister), Ranabhandadhikarana (office of the military exchequer), Danda-pasadhikarana (Chief of Police), Mahadandanayaka (Chief Justice), Bhatasvapati (Chief Censor) and Mahapratihara (Chief Chamberlain).

1.2.2 Local Administration

The provinces were divided into divisions (Visaya or bhoga in the North and Kottams or Valanadu in the South). The other units of administration in descending order were the districts (adhithana in the North and Kurram in the South), and groups of villages (agrahara in the North and Kurram in the South).

In Mauryan Empire, the Pradesikas or Pradeshtris looked after the Divisions; and the Rajukas, the Districts. The Pradeshtris were charged with the executive, judicial and revenue functions, while the Rajukas were to collect the land-revenue, promote trade and industry and carry out public works like roads and channels for irrigation. According to Kautilya the Sthanika had 800 villages under him, Dronamukha 400, Kharvatika 200 and Sangrahana (Gopa) 10 villages.

Local Administration during the Gupta period was well organised. A number of districts formed a Bhukti, while the district was called Vishaya. The Bhuktis were in charge of officers known as Uparikas, who were appointed by the emperor himself. The Vishayas were governed by Vishayapatis who were appointed sometimes by the Uparikas and sometimes by the emperor. The office of the Vishayapati was well organised, and used to keep records and files. Pustapala was the custodian of records.

The subordinate staff of the district administration consisted of officers described as Yuktas, Niyuktas, Vyapritas and Adhikritas. The Head of the District had a non-official advisory council representing different interests in the locality – the Chief Banker representing commercial interests (Sreshthin), the leader of the trading convoy (Sarthavaha), the Chief alderman (Prathama-Kulika) and the Chief Scribe (Prathama – Kayastha).

1.3 MUGHAL PERIOD

In the medieval period, though different dynasties rose in power, Mughals took a commanding role in the Indian medieval history; and their administration assumes a significant place in the Indian History. The emperor was supreme authority in the state, that is, the head of government, the supreme commander of the forces, the lawmaker and law enforcer. For effective administration, the empire was divided in provinces.

1.3.1 Provincial Administration

During the time of Akbar, a strong base for the provincial administration was formed. The whole kingdom was divided into Subas (provinces). The territories of the provincial units were fixed, and a uniform administrative model was established subjected with minor changes to suit the local circumstances. The control over the provinces was more effective with a team of officials, representing the different branches of the state activity.

However, the number of provinces differed under different Mughal rulers. For example, under Akbar, there were 15 provinces while under Jahangir and Aurangzeb their number rose to 18 and 23 respectively. Each province was under a Governor, also known as Nazim, Naib, Subedar or Wali. The Governor was a sort of mini King within his own Province, who was mainly responsible for the maintenance of law and order, control of the local army, realisation of state dues and provision of justice.

Usually members of the royal blood or confident nobles were appointed to this office. The Governor received authority from the Sultan, and stayed in the office as long as he remained in the good books of the king. Another important office, which was only second but not subordinate to the Subedar was that of Diwan who was in charge of the revenue administration. The Diwan was also appointed by the Sultan.

1.3.2 District Administration

The Suba/Province was further divided into Sarkars. The nearest equivalent of the District was Sarkar, during the Mughal times. Each Sarkar was headed by Fauzdar

Historical Context

who was executive head of the district administration. He worked under the control of subedar. In addition, the Amal-Guzar was the revenue official who worked under the control of provincial Diwan and he was assisted by number of subordinates. The District was further sub-divided into Parganas and such Pargana was headed by a Shigdar. He was responsible for the maintenance of law and order as well as criminal justice. The other revenue officials at the Pargana level were Amil and Qanungo, who dealt with the survey, assessment and collection of revenue. In certain Parganas, Qazis decided the disputes.

The Village was the lowest unit of administration, below the Pargana. It enjoyed a great amount of autonomy, and most of the cases were decided by the people without any government interference. Each village had the Council or Panchayat. The Panchayat was headed by Sarpanch, who acted as a link between the village and the government.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) “Gupta’s pattern of provincial administrative setup was more effective than Mauryan period”. Discuss.

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2) Describe the significance of provincial administration during the Mughal period.

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3) Explain the organisational structure of district administration during Mughal period.

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1.4 BRITISH PERIOD

During the first entry of the Britishers in India, India was divided into small and large independent states. The Britishers continued the process of conquest and annexation. As their territory expanded, they slowly and gradually created the provinces.

The creation of provinces by the Britishers was purely based on administrative convenience, economy, military strategy and security. With the development of national awakening and consciousness, the people of these provinces raised their voice for the reorganisation of provinces in view of their needs, wishes and affinities.

The provinces were divided into following three categories, under the British rule:

- Provinces under the Governor and his Executive Council;
- Provinces under the Lieutenant Governor; and
- Provinces under the Chief Commissioner.

Further, the Government of India Act, 1935 envisaged an all India federation, which was to consist of 11 Governor's provinces and 6 Chief Commissioner's provinces and Indian states. The chief prize awarded to the Indians by this Act was the provincial autonomy, which gave an independent and autonomous status to the British Indian provinces (Sapru, 2018, p.30).

However, with the adoption of new constitution; and creation of four categories of states, that is, Part A, Part B, Part C and Part D states, the problem of the reorganisation of states was not over. However, the demand for linguistic states continued.

The Parliament in December 1953, appointed a States Reorganisation Commission consisting of Fazal Ali (Chairman), H.N Kunzru and K.M Panikkar. On the basis of report submitted by the State Reorganisation Commission in the year 1955, the Parliament enacted the States Reorganisation Act, 1956. On the basis of this Act, states were organised into two categories, that is, States and Union Territories. Now, it is pertinent to study about the State Executive.

1.4.1 State Executive

It is under the Indian Constitution that under a federal structure an autonomous State Executive has been established. Although the Government of India Act, 1935 had a plan to introduce a federal system of governmental organisation in India consisting of two types of units, that is, the British Provinces and the India States, which was never implemented into actual practice.

The Provincial Executive under the British rule cannot be considered the old form of modern State Executive, as he was an Executive under a Unitary State having no legal or constitutional status. However, the Provincial Executive under the British rule (up to the Act of 1919) consisted of the Governor and his Council with the dominant position of the Governor.

The Dyarchy/Diarchy introduced by the Act of 1919 created two divisions in the provinces. The Governor with his Executive Council was made in charge of the Reserved Subjects, and the Governor and his Ministers were made in charge of the Transferred subjects.

It can be seen that although there was a gradual decentralisation of power from the centre to the provinces during the British rule, yet in main the provinces remained in the form of dependencies of the Centre. The same was true of the province's Executive. The machinery through which this dependency was perpetuated was the office of the Governor.

Historical Context

The status of the State Executive under the revised constitution was not to coordinate and co-equal with the status of the Union Executive, but it had a subordinate status although a federal scheme of polity had been envisaged in the revised Constitution.

The federal scheme as envisaged in the Act of 1935 could not be realised partly due to the non-participation of the Indian Princely States; and largely due to the outbreak of Second World War. The partition of country and the problems created by it, aggression in Kashmir and the victory of the communists in the Chinese Civil War influenced the framers of the constitution in favour of a strong Centre and weak Province.

Article 256, 257, 365 and others will show that the State Executive has to work under the guidance and direction of the Union Executive. Failure of the State Executive to comply with the directions of the Union Executive may result into the proclamation of emergency in the state under Article 356; and the President may assume all or any of the functions of the Government of State. The Executive of State has been working on the same lines as that of the Union. The State Executive consists of the Governor, the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers.

1.4.2 District Administration

As we all know that the District is the principal unit of territorial administration in India. The Mauryas who built up their imperial system in the country were the first to constitute the District as the most prominent territorial unit; and centralise its administration with all powers concentrated in a single officer called the Rajuka at its hierarchic apex.

The British consolidated their territories generally in terms of the existing districts; and they, in the early part of their rule believed that the larger the district, the greater the economy of its administration, and the higher the stature and the prestige of their District Officer.

The foundation of the present day District Administration was laid during the period of Warren Hastings. From the historical perspective, District Administration in India was designed to resist political activities and political pressures rather than to generate a climate to enable local social forces to resolve political conflicts in the larger interest of society. In facilitating the introduction of their system of administration based on the rule of law, the British modified the then existing pattern to the extent necessary to make it really effective for the purpose of realising land revenue and enforcing law and order.

The centralisation measures that they had taken in building up a prefectorial bureaucratic society, yielded quick dividends from the angle of their imperial objectives, but the consequences of such measures could be abated to some extent only with their programme of participation of Indians in the administration; and the introduction of Local Self-Government. However, important functions and powers of the district administration remained intact in the hands of government in the district; and the representative of the government in the district was also authorised to exercise supervisory and regulatory jurisdictions over all activities in his territory, and exercise residuary powers according to his discretion.

1.4.3 District Collector's Office

The District Officer in India is the linchpin of administration in the country. The office has evolved over two hundred years of the British rule. In 1765, the East India Company was granted the Diwani (Civil Administration) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In practice, however the company did not take over the whole civil administration. Its interest was limited to the collection of revenue. The dual system of government introduced by

Robert Clive was an utter failure. The divided responsibility of administration led to masterless confusion, and the province was thrown into complete chaos.

To remedy this state of affairs, Verelst the then Governor of Bengal created the post of a Supervisor for each district. He was in the real sense a precursor of the office of the collector. The Supervisor had to prepare a rent roll of the district in his charge and also to oversee the method in which they were collected and appropriated. He had to investigate all the titles to the land, distinguish between various kinds of land, regulate revenue and encourage commerce, and administer justice.

The experiment failed as the supervisors were untrained and inexperienced, and the landlords and others did not extend their cooperation. Their abilities were overtaxed on account of appalling famine. It was also believed that their duties were so numerous, varied and difficult that they called for almost superhuman labours. The supervisors continued to engage in private trade. They turned out to be trade monopolists, sovereigns and heavy rulers of the people. Though the scheme was a failure, it formed a nucleus for the first time of a British Administration, and we find in the Supervisors the predecessors of the present day District Officers.

It was in these circumstances that in a letter of August 28, 1771, the court of Directors expressed its determination to stand forth as Diwan and to take over through the agencies of the company's covenanted servants, the entire executive management of the public revenues.

Accordingly Warren Hastings issued in May, 1772 a general proclamation and three days later nominated the Supervisors as Collectors, vesting them with the executive powers of management and collection of revenue in addition to the previous duties of enquiry and investigation. The Office of the Collector of today was for the first time created by Warren Hastings on May 14, 1772.

The Collector actually presided over the Civil Courts established in the districts reconstituted in 1772. A Criminal Court was established in each district. The administration of criminal justice was also under the supervision and control of the Collector.

The Court of Directors of the East India Company was of the opinion that the Collector should be retained as a permanent feature of local administration; and the offices of Revenue Administration, Civil Judge and Magistrate should be combined.

However the duties, functions and responsibilities of the District Collector varied from time to time. As circumstances changed, the precise nature of the collector's functions has also changed. The work of Collector has in fact been a continuous expression of the growth in the range, and complexity of the functions of the Government.

Between the establishment of the Rule of the Crown in 1857 and Transfer of Power in 1945-47, the Collector was virtually the Government. The Collector was responsible for maintenance of law and order, even handed justice, construction, repair and control of irrigation works, land records, field surveys, collection and the settlement of fair land taxes, some attention to education, health, roads, posts and telegraphs.

The office of the District Collector survived the historic role of change from an alien regime to a national one. With the passage of time and the introduction of constitutional reforms, the Collector's many sided responsibilities increased in some directions and got reduced in others. The role of administrative system changed in the context of three major factors, namely democracy, development and decentralisation.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Why the Provincial Executive under the British rule cannot be considered as the old form of modern State Executive?

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2) Write a note on district administration during British period.

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3) Discuss the evolution of District Collector’s Office.

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1.5 CONCLUSION

In ancient India, big Empires were divided into Provinces and Districts for the sake of administrative convenience. The Provincial Administration, during the times of the Mauryas and Guptas, was organised on elaborate basis, and was modelled on the pattern of the Central Government. The Governors of the provinces were the chief channels of communication between the Government and its Administrative Unit. During the Mughal period as well, the whole kingdom was divided into provinces. However, the number of provinces differed under different Mughal rulers.

District as a unit of state administration has been in existence in the different phases of Indian History in some form or the other. The district is regarded as the most important administrative division in the country. The reason for the formulation of districts during the British rule in India was mainly the efficient collection of land revenue, and maintenance of law and order.

The District Administration as an agent of the State assumed the responsibility of acting as a catalyst and functioning as a custodian, insurer, protector and a watchdog of the

interests of the weaker sections; and welfare of the downtrodden with a development orientation. In this unit, we have described the evolution of State and District Administration in India.

1.6 GLOSSARY

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| Diwani | : Diwani Rights were the rights granted to British East India Company to collect revenues and decide the civil cases. |
| Sarkar | : The nearest equivalent of the district was the Sarkar, during the Mughal times. |
| Vishaya | : During Gupta period, the territorial unit equivalent to district was called as Vishaya. |

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1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- The Kingdom was divided into provinces.
- The provincial Governor usually belonged to the royal family and was appointed directly by the king.
- The provincial Viceroys of the Mauryan empire were generally assisted by the Council of Ministers.

Historical Context

- The Guptas changed the pattern of provincial setup.
 - The Gupta emperors appointed the most competent person as Provincial Governor.
 - Local Administration was well organised during Gupta period.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
- The Suba/Province was further divided into Sarkars
 - Each Sarkar was headed by Fauzdar.
 - The District was further sub-divided into Parganas.
 - The Pargana was the revenue collection unit under the control of Mukkadam.
 - Mukkadam collected the revenue and deposited the same with the Treasury.
 - In certain Parganas, Qazis decided the disputes.
 - Village was the lowest unit of administration.
- 3) Your answer should include the following points:
- Refer Section 1.3 (1.3.2)

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
- The Provincial Executive was an Executive under a unitary state.
 - No legal or constitutional states.
 - Provincial Executive consisted of the Governor and his Council with the dominant position of the Governor.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
- Refer Section 1.4 (1.4.2)
- 3) Your answer should include the following points:
- The post of a Supervisor for each district was created by the then Governor of Bengal, Verelst.
 - The Supervisor was in the real sense a precursor of the office of the Collector.
 - The experiment failed as the supervisors were untrained and inexperienced and the landlords and others did not extend their cooperation.
 - The present day office of the Collector was for the first time created by Warren Hastings on May 14, 1772.