

Bureaucratic Constraints in promoting Socio- Economic Development

Bureaucracy is an indispensable part of a government. The government is known by its administration where different ranks and files of government servants assist the government to prepare new plans and policies and implement them. Bureaucracy reflects the philosophy of the state and government at any particular moment. With the growth of development administration in India not only the administrative infrastructure has been expanded but responsibilities of the bureaucrats have also increased. In a country like India, which is the largest democratic nation whose primary objective is to work for establishment of egalitarian society, the responsibility of the Indian administrators is far greater. India is virtually a country where majority of the people are poor and among the poor the conditions of the poorer are pathetic and vulnerable. India inherited the problems of poverty and unemployment from the British rule. Indian bureaucracy is not a development of post-independence era. India adopted bureaucratic system what it existed during the British rule. During the period of the British rule in India, the entire gamut of development work was carried out not for the sake of the economic development of the nation and its people but to ensure

the control of the government over the nation and exploit the natural resources for the benefit of the British people. However, the fact which is notable about the British bureaucracy is that the entire administrative structure was well consolidated, fair, impartial and more or less free from corruption.

After independence the socialist philosophy and centralized planning of the government caused some basic changes in both the organizational structure of bureaucracy and in moral and behavioural character of the bureaucrats. Initiation of development administration in India with a view to improving the rural conditions of the country provided bureaucracy a preferential boost and treatment because it was the real mechanism of government to implement and execute its policies and programmes. Swarn Lata has rightly remarked, "During the period between fifties and eighties, bureaucracy became omnipotent, omnipresent and even omniscient."¹ The inclination of India toward welfare state and attention of the governments to improve the lot of the people specially living in the villages broadened the scope for people's participation in administration on the one hand, and increased the role of bureaucrats to work with the people for their self development on the other. The changing scenario involved the bureaucrats in a large variety of development activities and implementation of thousands of projects throughout the nation. Bureaucracy increased manifolds and almost became bloated. On the other hand, the policy and programmes of development administration increased the power and status of the ruling party (Indian National Congress). Its rulers boasting as fortune makers of the nation, developed undue relations with the bureaucrats and began to interfere in their affairs with the result that the process of politicization of bureaucracy took place. It developed a trend where the bureaucracy began to lose its neutrality and impartiality. To quote Swarn Lata once again, "The entire bureaucratic machine during emergency (1975-77) became a pliable tool in the hands of unscrupulous political set-up." Even after lifting of emergency the situation could not improve and "bureaucracy became more and

Application of new regulations, control of increasing infrastructure and their officers, issue of licenses and permits 'assigned unfamiliar duties to the bureaucrats and raised their status among the public. All these created new avenues for them making them stubborn by nature and corrupt by behaviours. This chapter critically analyses the trends, which have recently emerged in Indian administration affecting the development administration.

Changing attitude of Pt. Nehru towards Bureaucrats

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, was the man of vision and sympathizers of the poor people. It was he who paved the way for the growth of development administration in India. Pt Nehru even during the phase of freedom struggle was too much vocal about the cause of the poor and assured the people of changing their economic as well social status soon after independence. However, his liberal attitude of reaching out to his countrymen and his soft behaviour towards the bureaucrats did hardly help to change India as per the need. Rather it encouraged corruption among the bureaucrats. He was a bitter critic of ICS officers of India during the British period. He considered them the people of 'narrow and limited outlook', and he wanted that new India must be served by 'earnest efficient workers' who do not give much importance to the 'money motives.' When he became the prime minister, he took the existing administrative structure as "a ship of stare, old, battered, slow moving and unsuited to this age of swift change, which would have to be scrapped and give place to another."³ However, it is sad to note that he could hardly follow what he thought of before becoming the chief ruler and administrator of the country. However, it does not mean that his commitment towards social change was less. It appears that he himself was fed up with the traditional attitude and style of the Indian bureaucrats. This is evident from his speech, which he delivered in an inaugural address at the 24th annual meeting of the Central Board of Irrigation and Power on 26 October 1953. He looked upon the haphazard proliferation of bureaucracy as a sign of 'mal-development'. He

said, "New Delhi is a jungle, a jungle of able men. Still a jungle—you are lost in this jungle of administrative mazes and labyrinths. The way government organizations and departments multiply, lead us nowhere, but to waste."⁴

During the phase of Nehru's rule, the basic emphasis was on industrial development and major chunk of funds was diverted towards that side. No doubt, he borrowed the concept of rural development on the basis of block development from the United States of America by introducing the Community Development Project (CDP), but he never remained firm to one model of administration. Moreover, he never thought of decentralization of power and inclusion of people in rural development. Again, the people who came within the framework of the rural development were mostly farmers. There was no scope at all for the development of the people belonging to the deprived and suppressed sections. Nehru's style of defending bureaucrats was another problem, which not only emboldened the bureaucrats but also made them difficult and proud. Instead of correcting them in time by inflicting exemplary punishment, Nehru called them as 'fine body of men and women' who were 'clean and efficient.' He thought that bureaucrats were highly qualified and civilized people. They had the sense to understand their responsibilities and work for the people. They may not be called 'black sheep', 'mediocre' and 'fools'. It was such approach, which prohibited him from taking stern action against even those civil servants whose guilts were confirmed with the result that the Indian bureaucrats became more and more irresponsible to their responsibilities.

A question may be raised here as to why Pt Nehru did not make efforts to give foundation of a well-disciplined and committed bureaucracy to improve the lot of the country and its people. The answer is that Pt Nehru was a man of farsightedness and his intention to bring about basic change in socio-economic pattern of the country cannot be doubted. He wanted to bring India to the rank of a developed nation. He knew the shortcomings of Indian bureaucrats and their unappreciable style, which they had borrowed

from the British regime. Despite all these facts, Nehru did not want to disturb the Indian bureaucrats by taking stern actions against them at the critical juncture through which the country was passing during his time. The partition of India and frequent communal riots between Hindus and Muslims had brought about a number of human problems, which immediately required solutions. Here the bureaucrats had to play greater role. Moreover, the issue of Kashmir had become much more sensitive encouraging other states of India to secede from the Indian federal system. Again, the Chinese aggression in 1962, created numerous problems, which were unexpected. All these situations did not allow Pt Nehru to be tough and rough towards the bureaucrats. Secondly, Pt Nehru was a liberal thinker and democrat by faith. He hardly believed in hard punishment. He preferred the policy of persuasion. Trivedi is quite near to truth about his observation about Nehru's style of administration. He wrote, "His (Nehru's) administrative weaknesses were not so much due to any inertia, indifference or lack of will, as to a psyche, which came to be structured for purposes. He found himself unable to change his way of thinking to suit administrative requirements. His unwillingness to hurt people and his techniques of friendly persuasion and education did not always allow him to stand as a good administrator."⁵

Increasing pace of Corruption among Bureaucrats

Thus, liberal attitude of Pt Nehru towards the bureaucrats left enough scope for corruption in Indian administrative services. Diversion of more funds towards rural development and launching of various development programmes involving the government servants in development works widened the scope for corruption in the country as the years rolled down. Collaboration of bureaucrats with the political leaders further provided push to nepotism.⁶ Basudev Panda is of the view, "The corruption prevailing in the ministerial level steadily percolated to the lower levels of administrative work through different stages, contaminating everyone in the hierarchy."⁷

Even during the lifetime of Pt Nehru various cases of corruption came into light where top-ranking ministers both at the Central and

state levels were found involved. The ministers played vital role in corrupting the bureaucrats to serve their personal interests. To arrange jobs for their men and issue licences and permits to their wards, they put constant pressure upon the relevant officers who hardly dared to disobey political masters. They hardly heisted to undermine the due process of administrative norms and procedures while serving their interests. Such activities of the ministers encouraged the bureaucrats to take the law in their hands and do what suited them better even at the cost of administration. There is no dearth of examples where the ministers have been found involved in illegal gratification while doing favouratism in getting employment and posting and promotion of the government servants.⁸

Corruption is a vague term. Accepting bribe is not only corruption. In general parlance, corruption means falling down of morality and inclination towards dishonesty to serve personal interests. Corruption, in fact, is a deliberate and intentional exploitation of one's position, status or resources, directly or indirectly for personal aggrandizement whether it is in terms of material gain or enhancement of power, prestige or influence beyond what is legitimate or sanctioned by commonly accepted norms.⁹ According to K Santhanam, the chairman of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption, "any action of failure to take action in the performance of duty by a government servant for some advantage (personal) is corruption." According to Indian Penal Code, whenever a public servant "accepts or obtains or agrees to accept or attempts to obtain from any person for himself or for any other person any gratification" comes under the preview of corruption and he or she "shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years or with fine or with both."¹⁰

Corruption in Indian administrative system began to raise its head when the Indian political leaders took over power from the British. The administrative system had become considerably weak by the wartime neglect. The situation worsened on account of the departure of a large number of experienced officers of the British root necessitating rapid promotions even of those with little or no

merit. Large number of officials was recruited in haphazard manner to fill in the gaps on various scales to handle the expanded activities of the government. In the words of BB Misra, "These were developments, which afforded unscrupulous elements in the public services and politics unprecedented opportunities for acquiring wealth by dubious means."¹¹ The government tried to check corruption by appointing certain committees and passing the Prevention of Corruption Acts, but it could not be controlled. The sudden extension of the economic activities of the government put into operation a large number of regulations, control mechanism, licenses and permits. These involved a corresponding multiplication of the administrative processes, which broadened the way of administrative actions. For instance, the operational scope of the CDP and NES became so vast that officers at all levels could freely exercise discretion outside the four walls of law. Thus, the union of power and discretion vested at different levels in the execution of development schemes was bound to produce corruption. The stubborn attitude of the government servants and their non-commitment to the works forced the public to pay 'speed money' to the offices concerned to get the work done in time. It was found that even getting order from the higher authorities the officers attached to the lower levels hardly paid any attention until they were "paid appropriate gratification."¹² As stated above, the unwillingness of the government to take appropriate timely action against the corrupt officers increased the amount of corruption.

The reluctance of the higher officials to exercise their discretionary power proved their incompetence. Moreover, a corrupt higher official found he was unable to control his subordinates. Experience and enquiries make it clear that many heads of organizations are themselves corrupt. A corrupt officer can never combat corruption in his organization for fear of his exposure by his subordinates.¹³

Corruption is a common matter in India. No doubt, corruption is common feature of administration all over the world, but in India "its ramifications are so large and pervasive that it has corroded

the administrative machinery and retarded efficiency and progress."¹⁴ A general feeling is emerging among the people that development administration in India can never achieve its objectives due to presence of mass corruption. They feel that "with the bureaucratic apparatus with millions of employees, with its legislature, ministers, secretariats, boards and commissions which is a concomitant of a democratic government, it is becoming a heavy burden on the people."¹⁵ This feeling has emerged among the Indian because of massive corruption. To give pace to development administration, the administrative infrastructure from top to bottom has been extended all over the country. The government spends a lot of money on their salaries, allowances etc. There is marked increase in their dearness allowances and other service facilities. However, the government officials are not satisfied. They are ever on the lookout to make extra buck.

Administrative Corruption and Maladministration

In present day administration corruption and maladministration have taken place firm root on large scale. Affirming the truth Santhanam Committee noted that "during the last sixteen years they (ministers) have enriched themselves illegitimately, obtained good jobs for their sons and relations through nepotism." Nepotism and favouritism in the matter of recruitment to public offices is rampant in spite of the instruction of Public Service Commissions. The bright young men and women coming out with high marks from the universities hardly feel confident of getting a post commensurate with their merits and qualifications. It is all because of corruption, which has entered even in the Public Service Commissions at the Centre and the states level. Several cases have come to the light, which clearly show that how the members and the chairmen of the commissions are involved in corruption.

Declining Morality of Government Officials

Another trend, which emerged among the Indian bureaucrats, is decline in their morality. Morality is characteristic of mankind, which is related to inner voice. The whole edifice of a good society

is based on high moral character of its people. Morality is the strength of a good man. It binds one to do away with unpleasant things, injurious or harmful to others. An immoral man has no shame. That is why he is always found indulged in immoral acts. So far the morality of bureaucracy is concerned; it is the base of soundness of bureaucracy. The members of bureaucracy are expected to follow strict principles of morality. If moral character of an officer or even minor government officials is weak, it creates doubt and apprehension in the minds of the people as a whole and may malign the image of a good government. It is lust and greed for material prosperity, which makes one morally corrupt. Corruption and morality both are contrary to each other. When morality comes down, corruption is bound to happen.

Continuous decline in moral standard in public life is the serious factor responsible for corrupt practices and in case of India, it has become regular feature. Officials indulge in corruption openly without caring about criticism because they are morally bankrupt. The bureaucrats of good character possess the spirit of self-sacrifice and apply high endeavour to achieve the goal for which they are recruited. The morality of Indian bureaucrats began to decline after the Second World War where they got opportunities to amass wealth by participating in war affairs. In the words of Hoshiar Singh "The material benefits that came from it (war) not only adversely affected the character of those who gained from it enormously in ways legal and illegal, but reduced on the whole the moral calibre of many others. The vast wealth acquired illegally without difficulty and enjoyed freely, without the least apprehension, was a further factor responsible for the decline in the character."¹⁶ Moreover, the declining moral strength of Indian politicians and involvement of ministers in money-making affairs encouraged the Indian bureaucrats to indulge in corruption. They began to misuse power and authority for personal gains.

Nexus between Bureaucratic and Political Corruption

The most harmful and injurious trend which emerged after India's independence is the combination of bureaucratic and political

corruption where both bureaucrats and politicians joined hands together to serve their vested interests. This trend has emerged as one of the biggest hurdle in the path of development administration. It has been observed that the bureaucrats "tend to become handmaidens of the politicians" and officials have failed "in their duty to protest or disagree when things are done out of turn and against rules, procedures and public interest."¹⁷ It has also been observed that some bureaucrats occupying the high ranks are so ambitious that they have been found indulging in party and partisan activities. The politicians have established their hold over the lower level officials to serve their purpose. In the words of Nair and Jain "the political and administrative leadership is the fountainhead of corruption."¹⁸ There are senior bureaucrats who for the gain of promotion have fallen in the lap of the ministers. They have been found serving ministers even going down of their status. The Constitution of India has enough provisions for their safeguards. It is not that they served the ministers or politicians out of way due to fear, but to get undue benefits neglecting their bounden duties.

Thousands of crores of rupees sanctioned for implementation of various programmes under development administration have been badly affected by corruption. Goel has rightly remarked that "had these resources been spent properly without leakage at various levels, we would have solved many of our problems in education, healthcare, housing and other areas of social development... We would have been able to make a deeper dent in poverty and unemployment, which have robbed millions of our countrymen of their right to a decent life."¹⁹

Root of Corruption in Material Prosperity

In the present world there is enough material scope to enjoy life provided one has money. Today, money is considered everything because it is money with which one can buy the means of prosperity and luxuries. Everyone wants to grow rich overnight. Money and material prosperity have not only eaten up morality of man but also has made him mad. The root cause of corruption is the lust for material prosperity; hence, decline in moral standard of the people

throughout the society. Corruption has become one of the ills of inefficiency, demoralization and chaos in the country. On 20 November 1996, in the conference of chief secretaries for an effective and responsive administration in India, it was admitted that "the public administration and civil services at all levels were passing through difficult time in terms of eroded credibility and effectiveness of civil service, growing public perception of an unholy nexus between politicians and civil servants and criminals." This clearly indicates that corruption has become the life of the country because of declining moral standard of the people right from upper level to the lower level. Until moral standard of rulers, administrators and people is improved, nothing can help India to achieve the desired goal. Making of laws and amendments in the constitution can never check corruption in the country. BR Ambedkar while taking part the Constituent Assembly debates, stated "The constitution can provide only organizations of the states such as legislature, executive and judiciary. The factors on which the working of these organizations of the state depends are the people and political parties. They will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics."²⁰ But fact is that in India neither the political party is honest to its own ideologies and principles nor their leaders have the ability to guide the nation. Emerging trend of coalition politics in India has nicely illustrated that how politics of defection without any ideological differences has disunited a political party and corrupted its leaders.

Impact of Corruption upon People

Corruption due to decline of moral standard of the bureaucrats and politicians has worried the whole country causing great damage to the policies and programmes of the country, which have been adopted for public welfare and economic development. To quote Goel once again, "There is considerable frustration and dissatisfaction amongst the people, specially the weaker sections of the society, about the apathy, irresponsibility and lack of accountability of the public servants. There is increasing anxiety about growing instances

of corruption and criminalization in public life and administration”²¹ People belonging to poor, suppressed, deprived and neglected sections of India are losing their faith in the agencies related to development, law and order. In fact their faith “in the registration of offences, their timely investigation and the declining of prompt justice has been eroded.”²²

Corruption in India is a multifaceted problem, which has infected every aspect of life and administration. Starting from the political bosses to the lowest level of bureaucratic functionaries, none seems to be either an exception or immune from its evil effects.²³ Such mounting corruption paving the way for growth of nexus amongst politicians, criminals and bureaucrats have deprived people of benefits of development administration. In 1964, the Committee on Prevention of Corruption in India recorded that the whole country in every sphere and department of life is plunged in the stagnant of ocean of corruption; ²⁴ currently, the amount of corruption has reached the climax. The effect of such corruption is that the people, today, have accepted corruption as a fact of life and becoming accustomed to live with it. Disappointment and depression have entered into their lives. They feel that they can never be liberated from the hard grip of corruption because those who have been assigned with the task to control corruption are themselves corrupt. Until moral value of the bureaucrats, politicians and people is upgraded, the objects with which the development administration has come into being may hardly be achieved.

Notable Factors Involved in Corruption

There are various causes of emergence of corruption in the country. The decline of morality is one of them but the factors like fast growing modernization and industrialization are also responsible for corruption. These two factors have brought about unbridled lust for material prosperity. The civil servants or the government officials find themselves unable to enjoy the modern material facilities with the salaries what they get where prices of the commodities are rising fast. Another factor is lack of public awareness about how to

meet the challenges of corruption. The laws, which are available to deal with corruption, are insufficient. Various elements have joined their hands with corruption, among them the notable elements are pressure groups like the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Trade Associations, State Chambers of commerce etc. which are gangs, supposedly the breeders of corruption. They influence "the ruling elites by wining, dining plus providing them other good things of life."²⁵ Even the judicial system at lower levels, is not functioning efficiently, resulting in delays and corrupt practices. Says Rahul Pathak, "The cost of legislation is exorbitant, the process tedious and the quality of justice given the appalling lack of talents, is suspect."²⁶ Even the former Chief Justice of the Indian Supreme Court PN Bhagwati, remarked "If the Supreme Court exists only for the rich, what is the use of its existence? I have known judges who have sat on judgment for two years."²⁷ The number of the cases related to corruption has come into light, which envisages that top ranking bureaucrats along with ministers are involved in various big scandals where millions or crores of rupees have been pocketed. The investigation, which is going against them, is not encouraging. These corrupt elements have developed proximity with the corrupt authorities to manage their safe release and obtain a clean chit.

Another factor which emerged in the Indian administrative sector is impact and influence of the Indian industrial and commercial classes and the interests of the ministers, legislators and party officials. Santhanam committee found that possession of "large amount of unaccounted money by various persons including those belonging to the industrial and commercial classes is a major impediment in the purification of public life." He further observed "If anti-corruption activities are to be successful, it may be recognized that it is as important to fight these unscrupulous agencies of corruption as to eliminate corruption in the public service, but, in fact, they go together."²⁸ The vested elements belonging to industrial and commercial houses spared nothing to mobilize the rulers and bureaucrats to serve their interests by offering good amount of

money and material benefits. Acceptance of presentations in the form of material and money offered to the high officials or their temptation towards the life of luxuries and comforts degraded them from the path of morality. They became stooge of the vested interests. This encourages the officers and the officials of lower classes who keeping aside their morality indulge themselves in practice of corruption openly.

In fact, various trends including corruption emerged in Indian administrative system on large scale with the introduction of new economic policies in India. The second Five-Year Plan, which proceeded on the lines indicated in the industrial policy resolution of 1956, saw corruption growing into an organized force. By 1960, the number of cases investigated by the Delhi police establishment alone increased almost two-fold in about ten years²⁹ pointing to the growing amount of corruption among the bureaucrats, which attracted the attention of media, parliament and public. By the time the Santhanam Committee was appointed in September 1962, corruption had increased to an extent where people had started losing faith in the integrity of public administration itself, not excluding even its decision-making political apparatus.³⁰

The Santhanam Committee noted that the existing rules governing the conducts of public servants were more or less unchanged from those existing prior to the commencement of the Constitution. The Committee as a remedial measure suggested assigning specific responsibility upon the superior officers to keep a watchful eye on the integrity of their subordinates. Every government servant must take full responsibility for his own action and orders except when acting under the direction of his superiors. This provided an opportunity to the subordinate officers to protect them from bearing responsibility under the plea that what they did was under the direction of their superiors.

Several cases have come in the light where big government officials have been found doing favours to the big business managements or enterprises because of personal gains from those firms. Confirming the same fact, Nair and Jain say that "there have also been many cases in which it has been found that while in

office, they (government officials) have helped a particular business or industrial house in many ways."³¹ The report of the Sarkar Committee contained serious charges against high officials of the Iron and Steel ministry. Cases have also been found where the officials after their retirement got employment in the firms which they had benefited during their tenure of the government service. The Santhanam Committee recorded that a large number of high officials are incorruptible but the businessmen "make a careful study of the character, tastes and weaknesses of officials with who they may have to deal and these weaknesses are then exploited. The tendency to subvert integrity in the public service instead of being isolated and abortive is growing into an organized, well-planned racket."³²

The government of India set up the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 1963 in the ministry of home affairs with the purpose to deal with the case of bribery, corruption, misconduct of central government personnel, breaches of law etc. During the year 1990-91 the CBI registered 1180 cases, out of which 964 cases were against the public servants and the remaining against the private persons/firms. In 1991, it handled 2409 cases where 933 officers were involved in 633 cases. The CBI found itself unable to deal with all these cases properly and take timely action. The government also set up Central Vigilance Commission to meet the purpose, but that, too, did not bring down the rate of corruption in the country. Despite several steps taken by the government to curb down corruption and correct the administrative machinery, the attitude and behaviour of the government servants awaits to be corrected.

Public Awareness in Changing Atmosphere

According to Divya Thakur "Our bureaucrats seem averse to adopt themselves to changing times. They tend to be dogmatic rather than being flexible and amenable to new ideas and innovations."³³ Today scenario has totally changed. With the spread of mass democracy and emerging consciousness of people and their participation in development administration after decentralization

of power and introduction of Panchayati Raj, public administration demands total change in the attitude and behaviour of the public servants. Right to information, judicial activism, increasing pluralism in civil society with the strengthening of professions and appearance of non-governmental organizations are posing challenges to the bureaucracy with the changing environments. Bureaucracy needs to be resilient enough to observe and react to those changes. Need of time where much more emphasis has been laid down on development administration and welfare state is timely and prompt action. The implementation of programmes needs speed and efficiency. What is urgently needed is to train the bureaucrats keeping in view the changing circumstance. According to Pandey "They (bureaucrats) must be made to realize that they have to serve the people and not their aggrandizement They must be at the doorstep of the people all the time and if they fail, they must bear the brunt."³⁴

In his address delivered on IIPA'S, on 29 March 1999 the then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, expressed the view that his close observation of working of administrative system in India was not satisfactory. Said he, "My observation both from outside and inside have left me in no doubt that our system of administration is ill-equipped to fulfill our rational objectives and the aspirations of the common man." What the then prime minister remarked indicates that the system of administration in India is sick, needing immediate cure. It must be responsive, transparent, efficient and caring. It should respond to people's concerns. Its functions should be open and accountable. Honesty and ability to decide between the right and the wrong are qualities as important as professional competence. Ravishankar and Jayanthi expressed, "It should be compassionate. In a country where vast majority of the people are victims of poverty and neglect, we have to have an administrative system that has a heart that feels for the poor and a mind that cares for their needs."³⁵

Development administration today, demands application of technologies to industries, agriculture, transportation etc. Again, it demands people's participation on large scale from the grassroots

levels in decision making and in the fields of allocation of resources (planning) in the determination of conditions of work (management) and in improving standards of living (distribution). Bureaucry, today, has become a director and a regulator of activities in society because more or less each aspect of life of citizens in a society is subject of state regulation and assistance. Bureaucracy has emerged as an instrument of state action spreading its tentacles. Hence, it must be more responsive and accountable.

It was Mrs. Indira Gandhi who while launching the development programmes and schemes on large scale, introduced the idea of committed bureaucracy, but not to the people, but to the individual politician in power rather than to the principles of the constitution and the letter of the law. Since the seventies the politicization of the administration has preceded apace.³⁶ According to PS Appu offices of the IAS and the IPS have shown "a marked tendency to carry out the wishes of their political masters without pausing to consider if the contemplated action is in accordance with the law. Many of them have behaved like the servile, not as the members of the law of the land maintaining the principles of democratic governance."³⁷

Thus, the close proximity between the politicians and the bureaucrats to serve their personal interest has badly affected the progress and success of development administration all over the country. Since the civil servants have political patronage, they hardly care for any complaint or allegation. Such trends, which have emerged in Indian administrative system right from top to bottom, have made the government servants more irresponsible and arrogant. They hardly care to take timely action. They knowingly delay the decision. Files hardly move in time. The officers and employees belonging to any class, categories or position, sit over the files as long as they wish according to their whims and fancies. Since there is no effective provision for time limit to deal the file, they take undue benefits of such administrative loopholes. Any officer or employees due to selfish interests or being incompetent can conveniently raise any inconsequential query and delay the case for its disposal. Such officers may either be punished or transferred.

but they have the scope to manage cancellation of their transfers by offering money to their controlling officers or even by approaching their political mentors. What the country needs today, is a complete "overhauling of bureaucracy in terms of its attitudinal and structural patterns for it to play a constructive role in the 21st century."³⁸

✓ Rise of Corruption despite various Correcting Methods

The administrative pattern of India is based on sound principles and the government adopted various measures to check corruption but no; the corruption among the government officials has spread like an epidemic. There is no department of the government or office which is immune to the disease of corruption. The question is why has the corruption increased despite various stringent measure in force?

The most valid answer is lack of administrative ethics among the government officials and lack of hard determination of the government to weed out corruption. Ethics according to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* is "the science of morals in human conduct; moral philosophy; moral principles and rule of conducts". When ethics of an administrator declines, his faith in moral principles or good conducts begins to disappear. Moral values are indispensable for good governance. Efficient and technologically sound administrative machinery, unless it stands on high moral pedestal, does not serve the public; rather it serves a self-perpetuating and exploitative system. The comments and remarks regarding the administrative performances of the country given by the Indian judiciary and mass media explicitly prove that the Indian administrators and government servants are suffering from low morality. Public men, whatever their status should lead from the public; besides, politicking must stop. Lack of morality has corrupted each aspect of public life. Under such corrupt environment there cannot be any development until the government machinery is moralized. However, the reality is that instead of rise in morals of the government servants they are becoming immoral day by day.

Moreover, criminal elements who have entered into politics and administration, are posing serious danger to rule of law; according to Goel, the people are coerced to follow the dictates of criminals, thus giving rise to violence, unrest and explosive situations.³⁹

Ethics is the prime mover of a welfare state. Today, the problems, which have emerged before the people of India are due to lack of administrative ethics. Moral values are values that tell us what is the right, proper and acceptable way of behaviour. India cannot boast of high moral standards because morality of the country has gone deep down not only in administrative hierarchy but even in political arena. Panda is very much correct in his observation that no drive against corruption can succeed until the government itself is firmly committed to the task of weeding out dishonest and corrupt officials, irrespective of rank and status. Punishment for corruption should be exemplary, the least being dismissal from service.⁴⁰ The government should also assure that anti-corruption agencies are manned by personnel of unquestionable integrity.⁴¹

During the colonial period though the bureaucracy was not representative, its ethics were very high. There were good manners and relations between the government and the civil servants, but not for personal gains, but for efficiency in rule and order. Neither the ruler compelled the bureaucrats to deviate from the ethical standard for personal political gain nor did the bureaucrats expect undue favours from the rulers.⁴²

In fact there was no subservience, no lack of frankness in advice. There was no reason for any civil servant to feel any sense of inferiority before his political chief. After independence, with the expanding scope of public administration under the marked objective of welfare state and socialistic pattern of society, the number of bureaucrats increased, but their moral standard decreased. Inclusion of inadequately qualified officers in the civil service and reservation of seats for minorities and their recruitment with low quality paved the way for the growth of declination of administrative ethics. On the other hand, the quality of ministers went on declining day by day. According to BB Misra, ministers happened to be men not

merely without administrative experience, but also without the romantic halo of political sufferings. The only basis of obedience to the orders of such minister was their legal authority to decide, an authority not based on morality or character."⁴³ The decline in the standard of ministerial efficiency either encouraged functional pervasion through bureaucratic overtones in policy direction, or led to an abuse of bureaucratic initiative in sub-serving the interest of an individual or a group. What suffered in either case was the democratic principle of ministerial responsibility to the legislature.

Ministers and Bureaucrats

A pertinent question rises as to who should be blamed for downward trend in the administrative performances in India. Are ministers responsible or bureaucrats for declining moral standard in administrative system? Ministers and bureaucrats both are equally responsible for deteriorating administrative ethics, but there are several other factors too, which have affected soundness of administration. Ministers who come from different constituencies on the basis of caste and religion politics wish to appease the electorate even at the cost of administrative sanctity. They hardly hesitate to bypass the norms of administration for which they unnecessarily put pressure upon their respective secretaries to mishandle the administrative machinery for serving ministerial interests.

Secondly, the secretaries who are close to the ministers dare not oppose the political bosses because their future promotion and other interests would be fulfilled only if they are in the good books of their minister.. It has been observed, in many cases, that the secretaries generally accept even the wrong viewpoints of ministers either because of their unwillingness to displease the minister by giving right advice or to appease him by accepting wrong direction to get his patronage and favour. Thirdly, it has also been seen that the individual or the group concerned with the matter directly approach the minister bypassing the bureaucratic head. In this regard BB Misra has rightly remarked, "A tendency naturally grows to

look not to one's immediate superior for redress of grievances or for promotion, but to approach the minister direct over the heads of bureaucrats. This has brought about a situation where administrative authority stands eroded beyond repair."⁴⁴

Today, the most dangerous factor, which has created a big rift between the political executive and the bureaucrats, is politicization of administration. The threshold of bureaucracy, which was very much strong and tight during the British rule has been opened to all with the result that the elements that have entered in the bureaucratic framework have created numerous problems by undermining the significance of administrative system. The reservation of seats or quota for schedule castes and scheduled tribes and backward classes has enabled the members of such categories to have their share in the administration but at the cost of standard of bureaucracy. Reservations in jobs and academic institutions are not a boon but a bane. Presently, the recruits of reservation and quota occupy the high hierarchical rank of bureaucracy; these recruits are spineless

more functions to perform as a result of significant increase in the development activities. After independence the situation has changed. At present, there is no direct conflict between these two forces, but the politicians or members to the ruling party(s) are dominating over the officials to such an extent that the officials are afraid to do anything that may displease prominent local party men because they have close link with the ministers. Several cases have come to the light where the local politicians have been found to pressurize the district officials to do as directed. In case of officials' refusal, they do not hesitate to serve warnings to such officers. In order to have both good administration and good government, Khera suggests, "There should be considerable interpenetration between the political party and those representing authority on the hand and administrative function and power on the other," and that the bureaucracy "should avoid any rigid attitude about the exclusiveness of the administrative services and the administrative staffs from the play of political events."⁴⁵

It has been observed that due to politicization of administration and collaboration of the administrator with the ruling politicians the opposition members criticize it and generally blame the administrators. This has created a peculiar situation for the government officials. According to Nair and Jain, the district officers are often rewarded only with abuse and the enmity of all parties and factions. The administration is a scapegoat in political conflicts (between the ruling and opposition parties);⁴⁶ the increased bitterness of factional strife in the district political organization and the existence of sharply defined groups in the district have "made administrators wary of identifying themselves with particular factions." To quote Nair and Jain, "When state ministers are directly involved, then the district staff has no choice but to obey the directives of their ministers." The study reflects the truth that what has been in the recent years is that the ministers in the state government have used their officers in the district for their own political purposes.⁴⁷

control over mounting bureaucratic and hierarchic tendencies and expanding more scope for people's participation, the Mehta committee recommended a policy of "democratic decentralization on a national scale". It also recommended for a three-tier Panchayati Raj system of administration for rural development. The Village Panchayat was the lowest pattern of village administration while the Zila Parishad was proposed to act as the supervisory and guiding body sitting at the top at the district level with the district Magistrate as its ex-officio chairman. The Block Samiti was also proposed to act as a middle body between the Village Panchayat and the Zilla Parishad.¹⁹

Recommendation for Panchayati Raj Institution

What the Mehta Committee wanted to make the institutions of the rural development more effective and efficient was to give them more power and enable them to work without much interference from the government officials. As it was found that bureaucracy had mounted over the very democratic spirit of the local bodies, the Committee recommended that local interests and initiative in the development works could be aroused only if the representative and democratic institutions took interest in planning and supervision of development works. Hence, the Committee liked to put some social checks to curb the unnecessary bureaucratic interference in the affairs of the local bodies. Therefore, it recommended a policy of 'democratic decentralization' where the traditional executive agencies of the Central and state governments would divest themselves of certain responsibilities and entrust these to locally selected bodies for purpose of development planning and administration. That is why the Committee wanted to restructure the local bodies and suggested for introduction of three-tier Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI).

It was said that the Village Panchayat be organically linked with popular organizations at higher levels and that democratic bodies would gradually take over the general administration and development of districts or sub-divisions of districts. A suggestion

was given to constitute the Block Samiti through indirect election from the Village Panchayats. The Block Samiti was to consist of nearly 20 elected members having some women and scheduled caste representatives headed by a chairman chosen from amongst the members of the Samiti. He was to be called as Pradhan or Pramukh. The BDO was to act as the secretary of the Block Samiti. The Zila Parishad, the highest rural body of the district was to consist of all chairmen of the Block Samiti. For the village Panchayat direct election was suggested on the basis of universal adult franchise for a definite term. The Gram Sevak was to act as the secretary of the Panchayat.

Thus it is evident that the three-tier system of the rural administration recommended by the Mehta Committee was based on purely elective system. A little scope was left for bureaucratic intervention in their affairs. The Village Panchayats and the Block Samitis were to play a vital role in the rural planning as well as administration because these bodies were to be composed of the locally elected representatives. The Mehta Committee suggested assigning the Village Panchayats the duties like water supply for domestic use, sanitation, maintenance of village roads and tanks, land management, maintenance of cattle, relief works, primary schools etc.

Decentralization of Power in the Rural Area

A close observation of the report of the Mehta Committee submitted in 1957 reveals the fact that the Committee was very much interested in decentralization of power. During the British regime the local bodies had the powers on the basis of delegation where the higher government authorities had enough scope to intervene in their affairs. The Committee wanted that once the power is given to the democratically installed local bodies, they must have sufficient authorities to deal with the affairs without undue bureaucratic intervention. It wanted "local people's will in regard to the local development."²⁰ However, the Committee did not drop the idea that there should be official 'guidance' to help democratic

bodies 'to avoid making mistakes'. That is why it recommended that the district collector should preside over the deliberations of the Zila Parishad with one of his officers to act as its secretary.²¹

The CDP was looked upon as a primary concern of the central government. The Central Government officials of the CDP administration had been the prime movers and initiators. The chief secretary and the development commissioner of the state government had prepared the blueprints of the CDP for the whole state as well as their outlines for the districts while the district collectors and the project officers or the block development officers (BDOs) bore the brunt of its execution in their specific areas. The interlinking of the Village Panchayats with the community development blocks and the latter with the district organization for community development was not conceived in delineating a democratically elected village Panchayat as the development agency for the village and inter-relating the rural local self-governing institutions to the state administration for rural development for all the concerned works. No doubt, the concept of the Village Panchayat in India is very old and older than the CDP, but it lacked proper organization and financial support, what the blocks have today. It was the Mehta Committee, which put emphasis on interlinking three-tier institutions of the Panchayati Raj Institution. The third Five-Year Plan easily accepted the suggestions of the Mehta Committee and decided to interlink the three-tier PRI with the Community Development Project.

The problem before the government was how to make plans for rural development and how to canalize the fund towards the rural areas. A case study of Haveli Block Advisory Committee by Inamdar discovered that the block budget formulation was essentially looked upon as an administrative matter with which people had very little concern.²² It was Mehta Committee, which observed that "with the background of absence of democratic advisory bodies or effective self-governing rural administrative institutions in functional areas, we have to consider whether the time has arrived

to replace all those bodies by a single representative and vigorous democratic institutions to take charge of all aspects of development works in the rural areas.”

The Mehta Study Team, therefore, urged for the decentralization of all rural development work within the districts and all administrative functions except law and order, justice and revenue (land) to the Zila Parishads. The guidance, supervision and higher planning, hitherto done by the state government, was also proposed by the Study Team to be transferred to the Panchayati Raj bodies. In the words of Inamdar “Bureaucratism, democratism and decentralism were the triad ideologies, which were implicit in the development over the shape of the structures and their contents relating to future of the CDP during the closing years of the fifties and sixties ... The Balvantrai Mehta Committee’s report was based on these postulates.”²³

Time had arrived where bureaucratization had to make way for democratization and to decentralization because democratization was accepted principle of the Indian constitution at the levels from the national to the village. Centralization underlay the organization of the CDP during the fifties since its inception. Till 1956, the CDP under the direct charge of the ministry of community development was a bureaucratic organization with the exception of its engineer-head, a non civil servant. Centralization was accompanied by bureaucratization at the national level of the CDP. A central committee used to give policy direction to the programmes. The plan including the CDP had to receive approval of the National Development Council. At the state level the development commissioner, a new administrative mechanism, was introduced to take charge of the CDP organisation. It was expected that the development commissioner would not only provide a single line source of direction, control and accountability of the organisation of the CDP, but also act as the centre for coordination among the different technical departments at the state level, both in the secretariat and the executive departments. The development

commissioner would also liaise with the Panchayati cell at the state secretariat, which was under the chief secretary at that time.²⁴

At the district level, the district collector was accepted as the captain and coordinator of the team of development officers of different technical departments. His role was to give directions to technical departments of the CDP and guide and direct the activities of BDOs, project officers and other related officials. Since the district collector had to look after other district affairs, he had little time to provide adequate captaincy and coordination to the CDP. The bureaucratization at the district level and the block level was found in nomination of the members of the CDP and in selection of the chairmen. Induction of the village level workers (VLW) and the Gram Sevak in the Panchayats was, in fact, an innovation of the CDP, but their roles in village development were found unsatisfactory because of their nonchalance towards their duties. Moreover, there was many a shortcoming in their appointments. Most of them were not trained. They were neither properly qualified nor efficiently active. Hence, they hardly assisted the villagers on the required line.

Introduction of Three-tier Panchayati Raj System

The government accepting the recommendations of the Mehta Committee introduced the three-tier Panchayati Raj system all over the country taking the state's chief ministers in good faith. This opened wide scope for people's participation in local administration for local development. The structural pattern of the rural development based on the Mehta Committee was good but financial base of the local bodies was still weak. Moreover, corruption made inroads among the officials involved. Again, there were several sections of the people such as artisans, field workers, small farmers

to the PRI spared nothing to serve their selfish interests. As a result, the CDP, despite its popularity could hardly achieve the desired goal and played unsatisfactory role in poverty alleviation programmes.²⁵ The programmes, which were implemented through the local bodies, remained under the dominance and influence of the affluent people who were more conscious about their own development.

People's Participation in Local Administration ✓

The Panchayati Raj system was introduced in India with the marked objective to help the poor people in self-development and remove poverty from the country. Hence, it was essential to enable the people to take part in formulation of schemes and programmes for village development. Without people's participation in development administration bureaucratic elitism and totalitarianism cannot be checked. People's participation in development administration means the direct involvement of people in the process of administrative decision-making, policy formulation and implementation.²⁶ In the broader sense it includes all the activities concerning community life in social, economic and political fields, but in the narrow sense it means a convergent action by which the citizens take part in the accomplishment of administrative services without belonging to the governing or managing organs.²⁷ According to SN Misra people's participation or involvement in administration can be understood in four senses mentioned as follows:

- (a) participation of people in decision making;
- (b) participation in implementation or in development programmes and projects;
- (c) participation in monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects; and
- (d) sharing the benefits of developments.²⁸

The Mehta Study Team's definition of people's participation in the community development was comprehensive and pervasive. It said "People's participation is not merely their providing a certain proportion of the cost of a particular work in cash, kind or manual

labour. It is their full realization that all aspects of community development are their concern and the government's participation is only to assist them where such assistance is necessary"²⁹

The Congress government under the leadership of Pt Jawaharlal Nehru wanted "to promote a rapid rise in the standard of living of the people by efficient exploitation of the resources of the country, increasing production and offering opportunities to all for employment in the service of the community."³⁰ The Congress desired that the planning should take place on the socialistic pattern of society.³¹ Second Five-Year Plan under the guidance of Pt Nehru was aimed at increasing the national income and employment with greater equality in income and wealth. It stated that the "benefits of economic development must accrue more and more to the relatively less privileged classes of society, and there should be progressive reduction of concentration of income, wealth and economic power."³²

The main thrust of economic development during the Nehru's regime was to work for establishment of egalitarian society with special emphasis on rapid increase on the standard of living of the people who were still living below the line of poverty. The three-tier Panchayati Raj institutions were adopted by most of the Indian states with the objective to achieve the objectives mentioned above. In the words of BB Misra "Panchayati Raj between 1959 and 1964 (before the death of Pt Nehru) was a period of ascendancy, a period of socialistic efflorescence, which though dimmed for a while by the Sino-Indian conflicts in 1962, continued to receive the directions and guidance of Jawaharlal Nehru." However, it is notable that despite having autonomy and power, the local bodies in the rural areas did not diminish the poverty of the people who were landless and suppressed. They were yet far away from active participation in development programmes. The government of Pt Nehru talked much about improving the standard of the people, but in reality the standard of only those people improved who were either in the government or moving round the government. The government did a little to control the selfish elements of the affluent class who

managed to amass huge amount of wealth through mismanagement of the funds. After his death, the economic condition of the country due to Sino-India conflicts was not sound. Moreover, no political leader of India showed the interests towards people's development like Pt Nehru till Indira Gandhi emerged on the political scene of the country like a shining star. Lal Bahadur Shastri, the successor of Pt Nehru, was not even in a mood to run the community development programmes. He admitted that "he did not share Nehru's faith in the capacity of the people to rule them."³³

Declination of CDP

A question may be raised here as to what were the real causes of declination in the CDP after death of Pt Nehru. The answer is given below. Firstly, the CDP had neither its root in India nor the Indian soil was fit for its growth. The CDP was launched in India in a haphazard manner because America had agreed to give economic assistance to India provided it was ready to implement the block system of American type for rural development. So India launched the CDP but without proper background. Neither the officials attached with the CDP were trained nor did they have real commitment to it. As a result, it could hardly achieve the desired goal. Secondly, various study teams related to the working of the CDP found that its performance was not satisfactory. Thirdly, the group of vested interests who were interested in making India a capitalistic state took it as a hurdle in the path of their own progress. For instance, in Maharashtra, the sugar lobby openly began to put resistance on the path of the CDP. Fourthly, the most important reason of declination of the CDP was the lack of political will on the part of both the central as well as state governments. Majority of the state governments passed the Panchayati Raj Act but their interest in the CDP and the PRI always remained feeble. On the other hand, the Central government remained totally dependent upon the state governments for working and success of the CDP. Fifthly, one of the vital causes of failure of the CDP was mounting corruption and declining morality of the government officials and the people as

a whole. Most of the government servants and the public leaders including rural elites indulged in money making affairs with the result that the funds provided for the CDP and PRI were mismanaged. Last but not the least, there was lack of proper finance. The structural mechanism of the rural administration based on the suggestions of the Mehta Committee was sound but no required finance was provided to run it efficiently. Hence, the interest of the people in the CDP began to recede.

Asok Mehta Committee

To find out the real causes of failure of the CDP and suggest new measures for rural development the government of India appointed another committee, namely Asok Mehta Committee, which submitted its report in 1978. Like the earlier Mehta Committee it also put emphasis on decentralization of power in the rural areas. Though its proposal for two-tier Panchayati Raj comprising Zila Parishad and the Panchayat Mandal was not encouraging, but some of its recommendations were highly appreciable and the government accepted them. Keeping in view increasing scope of rural development and advent of modern technology in the field of rural development, it suggested that the Zila Parishad should be made responsible for planning. It was also of the view that members of the parliament (MPs) and the MLAs should be allowed to take part in the planning through participation in their respective Zila Parishads as ex officio members. The Committee reported "We have reached a stage of political evolution where it would be unrealistic to expect that political parties would keep themselves away from these elections. ... Their participation would make for a clearer orientation towards programmes and would facilitate healthier linkage with the higher level political processes."³⁴ It wanted planning for rural development from the bottom level³⁵ besides its emphasis on close relationship of the CDP with voluntary agencies and associations. It liked to create a 'planning cell' consisting of technical experts in various fields to help the members of the Zila Parishad in preparation of plans.

The Dantewala Committee, too, suggested that the planning team located in the district level should essentially move down to the selected blocks and prepare the block level plans in association with the BDOs, the Panchayat Samiti, voluntary agencies and other concerned at block level. The plan prepared by the block should be sent to the Zila Parishad for its final approval. In other words, it was suggested that rough planning should be done from the bottom and finalized by the technical planning team of the district level. The idea behind such suggestion was that the active involvement of the PRI in the planning process would provide a better climate for people's participation in the implementation of the plan. The government accepted these suggestions with the result that development administration at the district level got the support of elected people's representatives and non-governmental agencies. This expanded the scope of development at the rural areas. It also provided the opportunity to the elected legislative members of the areas concerned.

Good Governance of Indira Gandhi

Development administration in India got real and decisive push during the stewardship of late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. No doubt, the process of planning for rural development suggested by various committees served the fertile ground for planning from the grassroots level. The question was diversion of funds towards rural section. Indira Gandhi as prime minister of India took real initiative in this regard with the result that the country witnessed much progress towards development administration from 1970 onwards. She directed the planners to make a shift in planning from macro-level to micro-level. The planners accepted the multi-level and decentralized level approach of planning, which opened wide scope for people's participation in both the planning and its implementation. What the country needed, in fact, was to go for small planning covering various aspects of rural life with special emphasis on poverty alleviation programmes. Mrs. Gandhi realizing the needs of the nation, and also to fulfill her promises that she had made to the people

during election campaign, took up bold steps to canalize the national funds towards the rural areas. She dared to nationalize the 14 big commercial banks of India. Furthermore, she abolished the payment of the privy purses to the ex-Indian rulers despite hard protest and litigation. Her dynamic step invited criticism even from her own party. However, she remained firm to her resolve and implemented her decisions. The Planning Commission of India under the direction of the Mrs. Gandhi's government made it clear that "the current level of inequality is incompatible with our goal of removal of poverty."³⁶

The development plans, which existed during the sixties were Intensive Agricultural District Plan (IADP), Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP), Drought Prone area Programme (DPAP), Irrigation Project Area Programme (IPAP), etc. which benefited the big farmers only. The question was how to improve the economic conditions of millions of the poor and deprived sections of the people. Mrs. Gandhi thought of ways and means to achieve it. In the words of Maithani "Since the seventies the emphasis shifted from agriculture and rural development was defined as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people living in rural areas."³⁷ Under such shift, preference was given to the people living below the line of poverty first time.

Integrated Rural Development Programme

Now under the changed circumstance some plans such as Cash Employment Programme for Upliftment of the rural people and the Minimum Need Programme to alleviate poverty were launched, but these did not cover the whole country and led to regional disparities in development. Such plans increased the gap between the rich and the poor. So importance of multiplicity of programmes for rural masses through different agencies was felt. It was realized that there should be single integrated programme to be called Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) covering all aspects of the rural life all over the country with greater financial support from the Centre. Hence the IRDP in the form of 'single

largest anti-thrust 'emerged during the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1978–83), which further opened new dimensions in the field of development administration in India.

IRDP appeared as a multidimensional project, which covered many sides of the rural development. Since it was based on integrated

health by providing nutritious food to children and pregnant women, imparting basic education to the villagers, giving medical facilities, improving sanitation, protecting natural environment, supplying drinking water etc. It laid emphasis on establishing primary health units in the rural areas. Again, it wanted to alter the rural economic face through launching programmes, which may help the villagers in constructing roads, approach roads for villages, playgrounds for youths, community halls and other facilities. It brought the government and rural people near to one another. Thus it is obvious that IRDP is multidimensional in its approach and a package programme of various rural development services and activities of the government. It is based on centralized micro-level planning at the block level and 'offers a package of programmes for the rural people' giving more preference to those who are still below the poverty line.⁴⁰

In India, the IRDP from its inception has been related to an organ of the government to use its effort to "evolve the possibility of developing infrastructural facilities along with inter-sectoral avenues in an integrated framework at micro-level".⁴¹ The Planning Commission of India once more reiterated its commitment for giving "a practical shape to the nation's collective will for using all the latent resources and energies of the nation for an effective attack on poverty, unemployment and inequalities."⁴² Therefore, various rural development programmes were launched under a single agency known as the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) headed by the deputy commissioner and other officials of the district.

The IRDP was introduced in India in 1980. Its launch covered all the 5011 development blocks in the country. Thousands of government officials were involved in giving practical shape to the programme of IRDP. The prime minister in his inaugural speech at National Development Council Conference held on 3 November 1985 said, "Our anti-poverty programme constitutes the core of the 20-point programme. These will be expanded and restricted to give maximum assistance to families below the poverty line."⁴³ Regarding the people's participation in the programme, the PM said, "We must

evolve the people in implementing these programme. A new life has to be breathed into decentralized institutions.”⁴⁴

Thereafter, the sixth and seventh Five-Year Plans laid much emphasis on rural development under the IRDP. The main beneficiaries under the IRDP have been small and marginal farmers, rural artisans, tenants, sharecroppers, agricultural labourers, members of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, rural women and children. Poor family was selected as the unit of development. Programme were launched which created more avenues for self-employment. It “aims at wiping out poverty by providing opportunities for gainful employment and emphasizes on improvement in the quality of life. Seventh Five-Year Plan expressed its aim for “economic betterment of the poorer sections” by bringing “structural changes, educational development, and growth in awareness and changes in the outlook, motivation and attitudes.”⁴⁵ It put emphasis on such planning, which could “provide opportunities to poorer sections to display initiative and to stand on their legs through various packages.”

Components of IRDP

Thus many poor families were involved in the IRDP. The components of the IRDP such as Industry Service and Business (ISB) and the Training of Rural Youth for self-employment (TRYSEM), were also launched with a view to help the rural youths in obtaining self-employment with the help of the government financial and technical assistance. Provisions for giving rural youths trainings in the fields of driving, knitting and embroidery etc. were made on large scale all over the country with government stipends and subsidy money. The Rural Industry Programme and Rural Artisan Programme were already on the run. The District Industries Centers were directed to promote and develop small scale cottage and tiny industries in the rural fields. The District Industries Centers (DCI) were instructed to identify and specify industries/enterprises fit for promotion and development in each block and provide financial and material assistance to the identified participants to enable them

to set up units in this regard. Instructions were passed on to provide training under the IRDP and training "may be imparted in polytechnics, school training run by the Khadi and Village Industry Corporation."⁴⁶

To provide supplementary employment to the underdeveloped rural landless youth two special schemes, namely, National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Programme (RLEP) were launched in 1980 and 1983 respectively to provide more jobs to the rural unemployed people. The Government of India sanctioned crores of rupees to give practical shape to these two programmes.⁴⁷ Each admitted trainee was given sufficient amount of money to complete the course.⁴⁸ Allocation of Rs 230 crores was made as Central assistance under NREP for the Year 1985 only. A quantity of 2.3 lakhs MTs of foodgrains was also allotted for distribution among workers at the rate of one kg per man day at subsidized price. The Central committee had approved 320 projects at an estimated cost of over Rs 906 crores for the Sixth plan period. During the years 1985-86, an amount of Rs 400 crores was allotted for the implementation of NREP. The Seventh plan envisaged providing employment to the unemployed generation. According to outlays during the first three years of the Seventh plan for both the programmes were stepped up and placed around Rs 1200 crores per annum, which generated about 600 millions man days of employment each year.⁴⁹

Both the NREP and RLEGP could hardly achieve the desired goal. Hence, the finance minister of India in his budget speech in 1990 announced a new scheme for intensive employment to be implemented in 120 backward districts with an outlay of Rs 500 crores. It was this scheme which came to be known as the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). It was all done at the initiative of the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Under the JRY the expenditure was to be shared between the Centre and the states on 80:20 ratio. It was also decided to release the Central share directly to the concerned districts which was to be utilized by the Village Panchayats. The NREP and the RLEGP were merged into the

JRY. The main objective of the JRY was to "provide fuller employment opportunities to at least one member of each family living below the poverty line." It was expected that distribution of resources to Village Panchayats "will result in increasing the coverage to all the rural areas and also ensure the fuller participation of the people in its implementation."⁵⁰ The area of the works which were included under the JRY is vast covering all aspects of rural life.

Before launching of the JRY only 65 per cent of villages had been benefited by the rural development programmes. Now it intended to "reach out to every corner of the country and to 440 lac families in rural India living below the poverty line." The government of India provided Rs 2100 crores only in the year 1989-90. Moreover, launching of this Yojana increased both the value and responsibilities of the Village Panchayats because all the plans were to be chalked out by the villagers.⁵¹

The JRY became very popular all over the country and benefited a number of the rural poor. By providing part-time jobs to the rural poor, it gave them economic relief. Moreover, the construction of village approach roads, village streets, drainage, sheds, community halls, repair of old roads and living accommodations for the poor under the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) began to change the rural face. It aroused new hopes and aspirations among the rural people. However, keeping in view the larger number of the rural unemployed people and their pathetic economic conditions, the JRY and IAY did hardly meet their requirements. Moreover, the mass illiteracy of the rural poor and mounting corruption among the authorities involved in the affairs, remained big hurdles on the path of poverty alleviation programmes. So the JRY and IAY like other rural development programmes did not cut much ice to eradicate poverty and make the rural poor self-reliant. In spirit, the JRY carried many attributes, but on the ground its performances remained unsatisfactory due to various factors which will be discussed in the succeeding chapter.