

# **Chapter XII**

## **Rationalisation of District/Sub-Divisional level Committees**

### **Rationalisation of District/Sub-Divisional level Committees**

The Commission had requested the Deputy Commissioners and the Sub-Divisional Officers to furnish lists of district and sub-divisional committees for examining the multiplicity of committees and for recommending reduction in the number of these committees and their rationalization, so that the already over-worked D.C.s/ S.D.O.s were not over burdened with unnecessary committees. From the list submitted by Deputy Commissioners, the Commission found that there were as many as 84 district level committees in a particular District.

The Commission analysed the list minutely and carefully, and also held discussions with a few Deputy Commissioners and Sub-Divisional Officers. The Commission would like to make the following recommendations on the district level committees:

The Deputy Commissioner or the Sub-Divisional Officer is the kingpin of administration at the district/sub-divisional level and hardly finds time to do justice to all the committees formed at district/sub-divisional level. Also, there is no rational basis in constituting many district and sub-divisional level committees, resulting in multiplicity of committees, duplication of work, dilution of powers and wastage of valuable time and money. For example, the following committees formed at the district level could be dispensed with, as separate law enforcing agencies exist to prevent violation of the law:

1. District level Committee to prevent power theft,
2. District level Committee to prevent illicit liquor,
3. District level Committee to prevent cruelty to animals

Such committees, instead of strengthening the law-enforcing agencies under various Acts, are likely to dilute the powers of the law-enforcing agencies. Therefore, the Commission would recommend their dissolution.

The Commission also noted that, there are as many as nine district level committees (as shown below) constituted by Health & Family Welfare Department:

1. District T.B. Control Society
2. District Leprosy Control Society
3. District Committee on National Malaria Control
4. District Level Advisory Committee on AIDS
5. District Committee on State Health & Family Welfare Society for voluntary activities (SHFWSVA)

6. District Red Cross Society
7. Civil Hospital Management Committee
8. District Committee on Rehabilitation of Children with autism, etc.
9. District level Standing Committee for renovation, improvement, and up gradation of Rural Health Institutions like PHCs, CHCs.

It is observed that the committees at serial 1 and 2 above are registered societies formed by the Government and central funds are routed through these societies. Therefore, the Commission feels that all such registered societies will have to continue.

Similarly, District Red Cross Society and Civil Hospital Management Committee would have to continue for their specific functions.

However, the Commission would like to suggest that all other committees listed above be dissolved and one district level committee on Health & Family Welfare be constituted where all matters relating to health, epidemic, sanitation, etc. may be discussed with representatives of Health & Family Welfare Department, Civic bodies and other concerned departments along with leading public representatives. As health is an important service sector, the committee may also entertain public grievances on this sector.

The Commission also noted that there are as many as five committees formed by the Education Department at the District level, as shown below:

1. District Education Board under Sarba Siksha Abhijan
2. District Academic Council
3. District Committee on Scouts & Guides
4. Navodaya Vidyalaya Samittee
5. Committee for implementation of Mid-day Meal Scheme

The Commission would like to recommend that in view of the importance given to total literary programme and human resource development, a separate district level committee be formed for Education, Sports & Culture and Human Resource Development with representatives of concerned departments, representatives of local bodies, representatives of SC, ST, Minority and Tea tribes, where all matters relating to education, sports, culture, human resource development be discussed after abolition of above-named five committees.

The Commission observes that several district level committees were constituted earlier for selection of beneficiaries under various schemes. Some of these committees are listed below:

1. Selection of beneficiaries under various schemes like Antyodaya Anna Yojana, Annapurna Scheme & BPL
2. Committee for selection of beneficiaries under National SC Finance Corporation
3. District Level Selection Committee for ARIASP Scheme.

Selection of beneficiaries under any scheme in the rural areas should now be the responsibility of Panchayats, and, therefore, the Commission recommends dissolution of all the abovementioned committees formed for the selection of beneficiaries.

The Deputy Commissioner is also the District Collector responsible for land settlement, land management, land acquisition and requisition, revenue collection, maintenance and correction of land records in the districts. At present, there are three district level committees on land as below:

1. Land Settlement Advisory Committee
2. District Committee for Revenue Collection
3. District Committee for Computerisation of land records

The Commission recommends that one district level committee should be formed for land settlement and management, which should also look after such matters like revenue collection, correction and computerization of records, replacing the three district level committees named above.

The Commission is of the view that the District Development Committee (DDC) is a very important forum, which could be better utilized for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of on-going schemes undertaken by various departments in the district. For the DDC to be purposeful and meaningful, it should be so organized that the Deputy Commissioner has enough time to review the working of all the departments. A proper time table, department-wise, be prepared well in advance and circulated so that only the officials of the concerned departments are available for discussion at particular hour. The Commission feels that many district level committees can be dissolved and the related subject can be easily discussed in the District Level Committee meeting. Accordingly, the Commission recommends dissolution of the following district level committees.

1. District Committee on CIC
2. District Level Committee on RPRS
3. District Level Committee on MLIS
4. District Level Committee on National Green Crops
5. District Committee on Zilla Paryavaran Vahini
6. District Committee on matters related to petroleum products

7. District Level Committee for prevention of Manual Scavengers' Rehabilitation
8. Public Utility Coordination Committee
9. District Committee on abolition of Bonded Labour

The Commission also recommends that the CEO of the **Zilla Parishad** be made a member of the District Development Committee.

The Commission is of the view that there are some Committees, which are statutory in nature; these Committees shall have to function. A list of such Committees is given below:

1. Regional Transport Authority
2. Sub-Divisional Relief Committee
3. Fish Farmers Development Agency
4. District Review Committee for Joint Security
5. Airport Security Committee
6. Zilla Sainik Board
7. District Women Cell
8. District Committee on Protection of Human Rights
9. District Committee on Prevention of Child Labour

The Commission recommends that to avoid multiplication of committees in future, the concerned department should obtain prior concurrence of the Administrative Reforms & Training Department for constituting any District/Sub-Divisional level committee, involving the D.C./S.D.O.

The government may nominate non-official members to the District level/Sub-Divisional Committees from a panel of names recommended by the concerned Deputy Commissioner, keeping in view the representation of S.C., S.T., O.B.C., Minority, Tea Tribes and Women in such committees.

The D.C.s may be authorized to invite public representatives, such as Chairman, M.Bs/T.Cs, Chairman, Z.P. and a limited number of A.P. Presidents by rotation to the concluding session of the District Development Committee meeting for better interaction with the public representatives.

The District Development Committee meeting may be held in block headquarters by rotation to bring administration closer to the people.

In the Sub Divisions also, there are a large number of committees presided over by the Sub Divisional Officers which are mere replication of the district level committees. The Sub Division level committees should also be restructured in the same principles as enunciated above for the district

level committees to relieve the over-burdened Sub Divisional Officers to pay more attention to field visits and developmental works.

The Commission has recommended the aforesaid rationalization of District level Committees, taking into account the involvement of Deputy Commissioner or his nominee, but if any Department has justification for having such District level Committee, the concerned department may have such committees (for example District Academic Council) without the Deputy Commissioner or his nominee as Chairman/member.

The District level Committees should be convened with fixed agenda, and the agenda with the agenda notes should be circulated along with the notice issued for holding the meeting.

There should be proper records of all the important decisions taken in the meeting, and their follow up action should be discussed in the next meeting.

### **Implementation of recommendations of AARC: Reference from High Power Committee : Modalities suggested by AARC**

The High Power Committee constituted by the State Government for implementation of reforms measures, requested the Commission to examine whether committees / societies set up at district level at the instance of Government of India / External Funding Agencies for implementation of specific programme / programmes are capable of handling the financial responsibility with regard to utilization / audit / expenditure control and also to examine whether proliferation of such committees has proved to be of help to the State Government.

The Commission examined this issue at length and also heard the views of Deputy Commissioners Kamrup Metro and Nagaon. Views of a few other Deputy Commissioners were also obtained.

For streamlining the functioning of the district level societies (district level committees entrusted with the responsibility of implementing programmes and handling funds are societies registered under Registration of Societies Act 1860), the Commission feels it desirable to restrict the number of such societies and recommends that there should be only one society in each sector like Health & Family Welfare, Agriculture, Education etc. Multiple agencies for implementation of similar programmes only enhance the cost of the delivery services, which should be as minimum as possible, for the benefit of beneficiaries. The Sector wise societies should be adequately strengthened to improve capability for implementation of programmes.

Over and above, Government should stipulate specific guidelines regarding functioning of these societies covering important matters like clear road map with target and time frame, accountability, methodology for implementation of the programme / programmes, infra-structural support needed, book keeping for expenditures to be incurred, coupled with internal as well as statutory audit, monitoring & evaluation system etc. As engagement of Government auditors for internal audit would be time consuming and expensive, the job could be out-sourced to dependable auditors available locally.

The Commission in its recommendation regarding strengthening the role of Divisional Commissioner has suggested that the Divisional Commissioner should be involved in the district level developmental activities, for guidance, coordination, supervision, monitoring and evaluation, though he / she should not in any way inhibit the process which has been developed at the district level.

The Commission has also recommended that in view of increasing financial responsibilities of local level functionaries in the districts in respect of fund utilization, the Divisional Commissioner's office should be empowered to conduct audits and to ensure timely submission of utilization certificates. For this purpose, a fairly senior Audit Officer with a group of auditors should be posted in the Divisional Commissioner's office.

On behalf of the Government, Divisional Commissioner would be the best person to ensure that the particular society has been functioning as per the road map following the guidelines as mentioned earlier.

If a well structured system for utilization of the fund and achievement of objectives coupled with mechanism for timely monitoring and evaluation of the programme could be presented, External Funding Agency / Government of India would have no hesitation to accept such arrangement, since the very purpose of routing fund directly to societies is to ensure timely implementation of the particular programme avoiding rigid Government formalities.