

Chapter-6

Rural Administration

Introduction

India has a large number of villages. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people living in these villages. As Mahatma Gandhi once said 'if villages of India perish, India will perish too.' This tells us about the significance of the Indian villages. The villages in India have a localized form of government. So that governance becomes easy for the people living in rural areas of India. In India, the Ministry of Rural Development spearheads the development and welfare of the rural areas.

Administration of a District

You already know that India is divided into states. These states are divided into districts, which are further subdivided into tehsils or talukas. A tehsil is a collection of small towns and villages. The division of a district to a tehsil level ensures effective governance. The highest officer in the district is the **District Collector**. A District Collector is an officer of the Indian Administrative Services. The main responsibility of the district collector is to maintain law and order in the district. A District Collector is assisted by **tehsildars** and **patwaris**. Tehsildars are the land revenue officers. They try to solve the village disputes and also supervise the work of the patwaris. The patwaris ensures that the land records are maintained properly and land revenue is collected. They provide the farmers a copy of their land records. Other important government offices in villages are the milk societies, anganwadis, day care, society to regulate seeds and fertilizers, post offices, health care centre's and fair price shops.

Functioning of the Rural Administration

The fields in villages do not have any boundary or wall, yet the farmers have a well-defined land. It is the rural administration that keeps track of the land and maintains the land records. Every village has a system of recording of how much land is owned by each farmer. This job is done by the patwari. There are many ways of measuring the land. After measuring the land, a map is created. This map clearly shows the boundaries of each piece of land owned by the farmers. However, conflicts occur when the farmers claim that some portion of their land is being taken by another farmer.

Role of Patwari

Detailed records of land holdings are maintained in the villages in order to reduce the number of complaints. Each farmer's land is measured by the government so that there is a clarity over who owns how much land. It is the responsibility of the village patwari to ensure that records are maintained properly.

Duties of the Patwari

- Measurement of land and fixing the land revenue according to the size of the land.
- Collecting land revenue from the farmers.
- Maintaining a record of the crops being grown each season.
- Updating the land records every year or in case of any changes.
- Inspection of harvests in order to make an estimate of the yield it would get.

Role of the Police

In case of a conflict, the villagers go to the respective police station of their area. In the rural areas, the police station is an important link between the people of the village and the district administration. At the police stations written complains are lodged. Then, a **First Information Report (FIR)**, is registered for the case. Land disputes are the most common complaints in the villages.

Changes in Villages

Rural Administration helps the people to implement technological changes such as usage of tractors, harvesters, solar panels, organic farming and others.

In the European countries, many farmers are now turning to organic farming. This is a practice followed in India also. Organic farming are those where instead of chemical fertilizers, natural manures are used. Chemicals make the soil dependent on chemicals, and they lose their natural richness. The organic manures make the crop healthier, and also rich in nutrients, thereby giving a bumper harvest.

End of the Chapter