



Research Article

Analysis of Organizational Structure of Zila Panchayats

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Abstract

Article 243 ZD of the Constitution of India inserted wide 74th Constitutional Amendment Act in 1993 which states that 'There shall be constituted in every State at the district level a District Planning committee to consolidate the plans prepared by the Panchayats and the Municipalities in the district and to prepare a draft development plan for the district as a whole'. In line with the above amendment the government of Uttar Pradesh enacted the Uttar Pradesh District Planning Committee Act, 1999 (Act) through Act no. 32 of 1999 in July 1999. The Act provided that there shall be constituted a District Planning Committee (DPC) in each district to prepare District Development Plan (DDP) for whole of the district integrating the plans prepared by Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and allocate funds to sectors and sub-sectors within outlines of the DDP. As sectors and sub-sectors for expenditure are operated in line/service departments, DPC was also to consider development plans of line/service departments. However, the Act did not provide for preparation and approval of annual plans of line departments clearly. The provided that the DPC will also assess the physical and natural resources available in the district and will prepare and approve integrated district development plan considering its judicious allocation amongst PRIs, ULBs and line departments keeping in view integrated development of the district and environmental protection. DPCs were required to meet at district headquarters at least once in three months on the date as decided by the President of the committee.

Key words- Planning, Act, Government, Committee, resources.

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Introduction

The DPCs having maximum 40 members were to be constituted with 4/5th number of members elected as prescribed from the elected members of Panchayats and ULBs.

DPC – District Planning Committee

DDP – District Development Plan

ULB – Urban Local Bodies

The balance 1/5th numbers would include:

- (i) President of the committee - The Minister nominated by the Government

- (ii) Chairman Zila Panchayat

- (iii) District Magistrate by virtue of his post

- (iv) Other members as nominated by the Government

The permanent invitees would be:

- (i) Members of Parliament and State Legislature representing the constituencies in the district.

- (ii) Members of State Legislative Council elected by State Legislative Assembly or

nominated by the Governor in the district which they opt.

It was also provided that

- (i) Chief Development Officer (CDO) of the district would be Secretary of the committee by virtue of his post and would be responsible for maintenance of records and preparation of minutes of meetings.
- (ii) District Economic and Statistical Officer (DEStO) of the district would be joint Secretary of the committee by virtue of his post to help the committee in functioning.

DPCs in all the test checked division viz Bareilly, Lucknow and Allahabad constituted having many numbers of members respectively.

Duties and Responsibilities of DPCs

Under the provisions of the Act, the DPCs were required to perform inter-alia the following duties and bear the responsibilities:

- (i) To assess the local needs and objectives of the district within the framework of National and State plan objectives.
- (ii) To collect, compile and update the information of facilities available in Gram Panchayats (GPs), Kshetra Panchayats (KPs) and Zila Panchayat (ZP) regarding human and natural resources and to prepare integrated and comprehensive five year or annual development plan for rural and urban areas of the district on the subjects enshrined in Uttar Pradesh Kshetra Panchayat and Zila Panchayat Act, 1961 and Uttar Pradesh Nagar Palika Adhiniyam, 1916 or Uttar Pradesh Nagar Nigam Adhiniyam, 1959 respectively in order to address local needs.
- (iii) To monitor, review and evaluate the projects being executed under decentralized governance of the district including centrally sponsored schemes and Members of Parliament and Members of State

Legislative Assembly Local Area Development funds.

- (iv) To submit progress report of the projects included in the district plans to the State Government regularly.

Fund Flow Mechanism

The Act provided that the Government would make district wise provision of funds in its Annual Financial Statement within the maximum limit of district financial outlay and would allot lump sum funds to the district after appropriation. Further, the Government directed (July 2009) all the District Magistrates that the plan outlay for the district development plans would be decided taking into account the resources from the state as well as internal resources of Zila Panchayat and ULBs. However, scrutiny of the records of DDPs of four test checked districts revealed that the resources of ZPs and ULBs were not taken into consideration while deciding the plan outlay of the DDPs.

Audit Objectives

The audit was conducted to assess whether:

- (i) The Government had constituted DPCs as per provisions of article 243 ZD of the Constitution of India.
- (ii) The DPCs were working effectively and efficiently in preparing, integrating and approving the district plans of Panchayats and data base of facilities and resources of the district for preparing district plans were available at district level.
- (iii) The district plans for PRIs were being executed as approved by DPCs.
- (iv) Efficient monitoring system existed in districts and was working effectively.

Audit Scope and methodology

The audit party test checked records of four ZPs and 11 KPs selected on geographical basis and on the criteria of Backward Region Grant

Fund scheme (BRGF) being implemented in these districts. The two districts (Unnao and Hardoi) were BRGF districts whereas the remaining two (Pratapgarh and Allahabad) were non-BRGF districts. Records of three GPs in each test checked KP was scrutinized. During the course of audit the audit party covered the period from the year 2008 to 2011 and collected information from DEStOs of selected districts.

The Government enacted the Act in the year 1999 after six years of passing the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act and framed rules only in January 2008 after more than eight years of passing of the Act for conducting elections of DPCs and prescribing the process for preparing and approving the district plans. DPCs have been all test checked in districts under Bareilly, Lucknow and Allahabad division. Thus, the step to achieve the objectives of article 243 ZD of the constitution regarding preparation of integrated draft DDP for the district as a whole was taken after a lapse of 15 years of the passed amendment and the process of preparation of integrated DDPs including PRIs and ULBs was only started in the year 2008.

The Act provided that the DPCs would collect data of physical and human resources available in the district and would prepare district plans utilizing the resources judiciously ensuring integrated development of the district by modifying and integrating the five year or annual development plans prepared by PRIs and ULBs for rural and urban areas respectively. However, the Act while making provisions for allocation of funds to districts for district plans provided that the Government would allocate lump sum funds to districts within the district financial outlay in the annual financial statement. The proposals under the district plan were to be submitted within the

district financial outlay as decided for the district from the state fund. Scrutiny of records of test checked districts revealed that DPCs approved DDPs as per predicated allocations for line departments and the financial outlay for the district did not include provisions/funds for PRIs and ULBs and also the resources of PRIs and ULBs were not included in the district financial outlay. Thus, financial outlay of the district did not integrate the finance of PRIs and ULBs while preparing the DDPs.

The Act envisaged for allocation of expenditure for outlays in sectors and subsectors within the DDP outlay and to prepare DDP integrating the plans of Panchayats and ULBs in the district by DPCs. Further, the Government directed (July, 2009) the District Magistrates to include the projects proposed by PRIs and ULBs in the DDP as per availability of financial resources in these institutions so that their projects could be financed outside the state exchequer. Scrutiny of the records of test checked districts revealed that the consolidated statements of different types of works submitted by GPs to respective KPs and the KPs in turn submitted their consolidated statements of projects including the statements of GPs to the concerned ZP. The ZP submitted the consolidated statements of projects to the DPC showing quantity of different type of works with their estimated costs without mentioning name and site of the works. However, the DPCs included the statements in the district plan outlays but did not inform the PRIs. Regarding the action taken in this regard and PRIs executed their annual work plans as approved by their respective boards. Thus, the annual work plans of PRIs were not integrated with the district plan outlays and DPCs were ineffective in PRIs as the works executed by PRIs were in isolation with the DDPs. On being pointed out,

the AparMukhyaAdhikaris (AMAs) of concerned ZPs, the Block Development Officers (BDOs) of test checked KPs and Gram PanchayatAdhikaris (GPAs) of test checked GPs confirmed the facts in their replies (August-December, 2011).

The DEStOs of all test checked fourteen districts did not maintain the prescribed database regarding natural and human resources of the district to support planning process. The Act did not prescribe time schedule for preparation and submission of annual plans by PRIs. However, the Government ordered and prescribed (July, 2009) time schedule for preparation of development plans at each level of PRIs for the year 2009-10. Scrutiny of records of test checked PRIs (GPs, KPs) revealed that they prepared the consolidated statements of proposed projects (showing quantity of different type of works with their estimated costs without mentioning name and site of the works) adhering to the prescribed time schedule after having received the circular from DEStOs, and submitted to the respective DPCs.

However, PRIs did not prepare integrated annual plans regularly and required data of natural and human resources were not available with them. PRIs prepared annual

plans as per demands of members of respective boards and executed in isolation of the approved DDPs. Thus, the consolidated statement of projects was not integrated with DDPs and DPCs were ineffective in PRIs.

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