
UNIT 14 PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SECRETARIAT AND DIRECTORATES

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14.0 OBJECTIVES

After you have read this Unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss the meaning, significance and role of Directorates;
- Explain why Directorates should function both at the state as well as sub-statal levels;
- Throw light on the position and significance of the Board of Revenue as a state level revenue agency, which is distinct and separate from the rest of the governmental machinery at the state level;
- Understand the factors which create tensions in the Secretariat-Directorate relationship;
- Explain the existing framework of this relationship (as obtaining under the traditional split system) and identify its strong and weak points;
- Highlight the possible approaches which might be invoked to generate alternative models of the Secretariat-Directorate relationship; and
- Bring out the shades of differences, which distinguish one alternative from another.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

This Unit discusses a diverse range of agencies at the state level. Two state level agencies (i.e., Directorates and the Board of Revenue) are discussed here, and Directorate-Secretariat relationship is also brought out.

The Unit essentially highlights the following terms/concepts/institutions/ factors at the regional level:

Directorates

Directorates are the executive arm of the state government; they translate into action the policies that are framed by the State Secretariat. Even though the terms

'Directorates' and 'Executive Agencies' are often used interchangeably, Directorates are but one type of executive agency. This point is pursued later in the Unit. Directorates, as we shall see, are classified into two categories – Attached Offices and Subordinate Offices. This classification facilitates academic comprehension of the roles, which the two types perform in policy execution.

Regional Administration

Because the Directorates are concerned with policy execution, and the execution of policy must necessarily take place in the field (i.e., at the district, block and village levels), the need arises for them (Directorates) to create intermediate level administrative agencies to coordinate and supervise the field operations. This intermediate level administrative setup between the state headquarters (Directorate) and the district is referred to as 'regional administration'. A generic term, which is used to refer to regional level agencies (and those at district and lower levels). They could be called sub-statal agencies because they exist at levels below the state headquarters. Each region comprises a certain number of districts. Thus, a region is a real unit below the state level and above the district level. As a rule, though not always, all executive departments at the state headquarters have regional organisations; names which these regional agencies carry, vary from department to department.

Divisional Commissioners

Divisional Commissioners, referred to above, are regional agencies in respect of the states' revenue function. Work of revenue administration at the state headquarters is entrusted not to a government department, but to an autonomous agency called the Board of Revenue. Therefore, Divisional Commissioners are but the regional level representatives of the Board of Revenue.

Board of Revenue

Board of Revenue is an administrative innovation of a great significance. This institution was created way back in 1786 to relieve state governments of the detailed work in the field of revenue administration. Since then, a large number of states in India have created Boards of Revenue. The equivalents of the Board of Revenue in states, which have not created the boards, are Finance Commissioners or Revenue Tribunals.

As you have already read, the Secretariat, as the policy-making body and Directorate, as the policy implementing agency, constitute the two wheels of the governmental machinery; unless they achieve a certain measure of coordination and cooperation, the ability of the machinery to deliver goods will be hampered.

At a theoretical plane, the two have well-defined powers, jurisdiction and roles but, in practice, various factors blur the demarcations leading to estrangement and mutual acrimony between the two wings, ultimately affecting the performance of the government.

The question of relationship between the Secretariat and Directorate is important per se. It, however, assumes added significance in a situation where this relationship has deflected from its original course, as has happened in India, and as would, in fact, happen in any dynamic situation. Why has the relationship between the two tended towards some kind of estrangement? Can some alternative models be suggested to reformulate the relationship between Secretariat and Non-secretariat organisations? In this Unit, these questions are being explained.

The existing set up in the country, under which the two function with complete independence from each other, under the discipline of a well-defined framework of responsibilities and relationship, has attracted criticism; mainly that the Secretariat

tends to transgress its defined jurisdiction; does not adequately delegate to the Attached Offices; delays scrutiny of proposals submitted by the Non-secretariat organisations; and so on. On these grounds, it is suggested that the present split system be abandoned. An attractive model, under which these two wings are merged, has been recommended and practically tried out. The merger or amalgamation model seeks to bridge the gulf between Secretariat and Attached Offices by integrating them into a single entity. This ('Bridging-the-gulf') approach proposes other models also. It may be pointed out that where amalgamation has been tried out, it has run into difficulties of various kinds, and, therefore, efforts have, in fact, been underway to de-amalgamate the two offices. Clearly, this (De-amalgamation) signifies a return to the traditional split system or, in other words, a return to the status-quo model. Thus, the question of relationship between the Secretariat and Directorate is a vexed one. Readymade solutions to remodel this relationship are difficult to come up.

14.2 DIRECTORATES: MEANING AND ORGANISATION

Meaning and Nomenclature

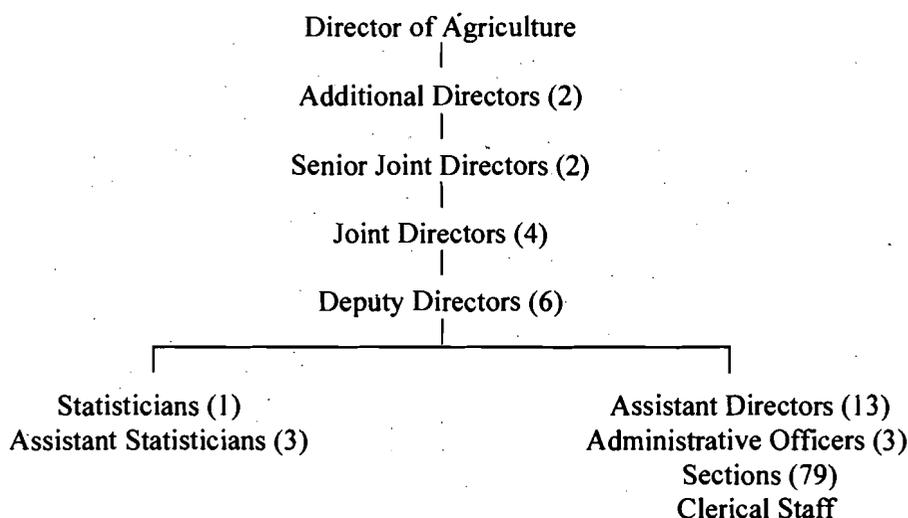
As has been explained in the last Unit, the Secretariat is concerned with the setting of the broader policies and goals of the state government while the responsibility for achieving those goals and executing those policies rests with the heads of the executive departments. The executive agencies are as a rule located outside the Secretariat and constitute distinct organisational entities. A popular label to identify an executive agency is 'Directorate'. In a large number of cases, the heads of the executive agencies are known as directors. Many examples of this could be cited; director of agriculture, director of animal husbandry, director of education, director of social welfare, director of transport, director of public health, director of town planning, and so on.

However, other nomenclatures are also used to refer to the heads of the executive departments. Thus, the executive head of the department of police is known as the Inspector/Director General of Police; that of the jail department, the Inspector-General of jails; that of the forest department, the chief conservator of forests; that of the cooperative department, the registrar of cooperative societies; that of the sales tax department, the commissioner of sales tax; that of the irrigation department, the chief engineer (irrigation); that of the printing and stationery department, the controller and so forth. In other words, although in a large number of cases, the heads of the executive departments are called Directors, they are also known by other names.

Organisation of Directorates at the State and Sub-statal Levels

Apart from the state level, the executive agencies also function at the sub-statal levels. This is quite natural. Because, while the policy must be formulated at one centre (the state headquarters: presently, the state headquarters is signified by Secretariat and Directorates), its execution must necessarily take place in the field. Therefore, the Directorates must make a conscious effort at achieving a vertical penetration down to the grassroots level. When this is done, lesser Directorates emerge at the regional level: the state level executive department establishes offices in the regions; a region is simply a territorial unit below the state but above the district level. When this process progresses further down the line, the district, block and village level field agencies of a Directorate emerge.

To illustrate the organisational structure of the Directorate at the state and sub-statal levels, we present below the Organisation chart of the Directorate of Food and Agriculture of the Government at the state level.



At the state level, as is shown in the Organisation Chart, the headship would normally be with a 'full' director who would be assisted by a group of lesser directors: additional directors, senior joint directors, joint directors, deputy directors, assistant directors, and other functionaries. Of course, as would be understood, depending upon the workload of a department, the number of levels of hierarchy at the headquarters could be larger or smaller. The regional level set up of an executive department, would usually be headed by an officer of a lower rank, a senior joint director in this case. It could indeed even be a person of simply a joint director or even lower level; that would again depend on the workload and other factors. The district level organisation of the Food and Agriculture Department has as its head a joint director. This is, again, not a typical situation. Many district level offices of the executive departments are headed by deputy or even assistant directors. Again, many factors will combine to determine the rank of the officer who may head the district level set up.

At the level immediately below the district (block level), each development department is represented by an extension officer who is a part of the extension team functioning under the block development officer. Thus, to take an example, there would be an agriculture extension officer in each block, representing the state level directorate of agriculture. At the village level, as is well-known, there exist the multi-purpose extension functionaries known as the village level workers (VLWs).

14.3 TYPES OF EXECUTIVE AGENCIES

With a steady increase in the functions of government, the executive agencies have grown in number as well as variety. The two most familiarly known executive agencies are the attached offices and the subordinate offices. But with the emergence of a large public sector in the country, other types of executive agencies have also developed. Of these, the public corporation (e.g., Life Insurance Corporation of India) and the government company (e.g., Steel Authority of India Ltd.) remain the most outstanding examples. There are other types of executive agencies too, but those details need not hold us up here. What needs to be remembered is that with the growing governmental functions, a variety of organisational patterns have been evolved to suit the requirements of the varied range of functions, which the government is increasingly taking on.

Role of Attached and Subordinate Offices

Let us now briefly see what are Attached and Subordinate Offices, which, as we have above stated, are the two most important forms of executive agencies. The **Manual of Office Procedure** describe these as:

“Where the execution of policies of government requires decentralisation of executive direction and the establishment of field agencies, a Ministry has under its domain, the subsidiary offices, which are Attached and Subordinate Offices. The **Attached Offices** are responsible for providing executive direction required for the implementation of the policies laid down by the Ministry to which they are attached. They also serve as repository of technical information and advice to the Ministry on technical aspects of the questions dealt with by them. The **Subordinate Offices** function as field establishments or as the agencies responsible for the detailed execution of the decisions of government. They generally function under the direction of an Attached Office...” (Emphasis added).

Thus, the Attached Offices have in essence a two-fold function. First, they furnish technical data and advice to the Ministry to which they are attached. (Ministry is the policy making body, but this policy making exercise must be based on technical information and advice. It is the Attached Office, which supplies this assistance to the ministry). The second function of the Attached Office is to provide executive directions to the agencies, which are responsible for implementing the policies of government.

As contrasted with the Attached Office, a Subordinate Office functions as the field establishment or as the agency responsible for the detailed execution of the policies and programmes of the government. As a rule, it functions under an Attached Office.

As oft-quoted analogy with human body clarifies the distinction between Attached and Subordinate Offices further:

“The Secretariat is the brain, the Attached Office is the trunk, and the Subordinate Offices under them are the limbs of the body.”

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Discuss the different types of executive agencies.

2) Why should the Directorates have sub-statal formations?

14.4 THE BOARD OF REVENUE

Status and Position

The Board of Revenue, as the name itself suggests, is an agency, at the state level, concerned with revenue administration in the state. Although, it exists at the state level, it is not a part and parcel of the state government machinery. The preceding statement is intended to underline and emphasise the fact that unlike the government departments – which are definitionally a part and parcel of the governmental machinery – the Board of Revenue is an autonomous agency created under a statute. By virtue of this fact, the Board has an existence, distinct and separate from the government.

The Board as a Supra-district Level Agency

The principal justification for the creation of Board of Revenue lies in that it relieves the state government of the detailed work in the field of revenue administration. It also has a large supervisory and coordination role *vis-à-vis* the district level revenue functionaries (Collectors/ Deputy Commissioners). The fact that it exists at the state headquarters level should not be allowed to blur the truth that the Board of Revenue is an agency, separate from the Central or state government as such. (Since it is a statutory body, it is endowed with a distinct legal identity of its own). This, coupled with the fact that it discharges supervisory functions in relation to the District Collector's lends justification to its classification as a supra-district level agency.

14.4.1 The Pattern of Revenue Administration at the Supra-district Level

There is no uniformity in the pattern of revenue administration at the supra-district level in the country. In this connection, two points need to be particularly remembered. *First*, there are some states in which there are two administrative agencies (one at the state headquarters level and another at the regional level) between the district and the state government and there are others in which there is only one administrative agency. *Second*, all states do not have a Board of Revenue; some have, in place of the Board, a Financial Commissioner or Revenue Tribunal. In these terms, five distinct patterns of revenue administration at the supra-district level can be identified. These are:

Pattern One

Under this, there is only one intermediate level, i.e., the Board of Revenue, with no regional/divisional level revenue set up (known as the Divisional Commissioner). Under this pattern fall the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Rajasthan.

Pattern Two

Under this pattern, there are two intermediate agencies, viz., Board of Revenue and Divisional Commissioners. This Pattern is prevailing in the states of U.P, M.P, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Assam.

Pattern Three

Under this pattern also, there are two intermediate agencies. But here there is no Board of Revenue; the Board's equivalent under this pattern is Financial Commissioner. So, under this pattern, there is a Financial Commissioner at the headquarters level and Divisional Commissioner at the regional level. This situation prevails in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

Pattern Four

Under this pattern, again, there are two intermediate agencies. But, as is the case with the Pattern Three, here also there is no Board of Revenue. The Board's equivalent, under this pattern, is the Revenue Tribunal. The two intermediate links

here, therefore, consist of (i) Revenue Tribunal, and (ii) Divisional Commissioner. This pattern is prevailing in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The difference between the two states is that whereas Commissioners in Maharashtra are regionally located, in Gujarat they are located at the state headquarters and their duties are functionally distributed.

Pattern Five

This pattern is prevalent in Andhra Pradesh, where the Board of Revenue was abolished in 1977 and since then its functions are being discharged by independent Heads of Departments called Commissioners. There are no Divisional Commissioners at the regional level. At present, there are five Commissioners each looking after (i) Land Revenue; (ii) Survey, Settlement and Land Records; (iii) Commercial Taxes; (iv) Excise, and (v) Civil Supplies, respectively.

14.4.2 Composition and Functions of the Board of Revenue

Composition

The number of the members of the Board varies from state to state. The U.P. Board, for instance, has six members, whereas the Bihar and Orissa Boards have one full-time member each. The practice everywhere is to appoint only the senior officers as members of the Board. The work among members is functionally divided. Decisions on important policy matters are taken by the full Board. The Board has a Secretariat of its own.

Functions

The functions of Boards of Revenue vary a little from state to state. Generally speaking, the Boards perform the following functions:

- i) The Board advises the government on all matters of revenue policy.
- ii) It is the highest body in the revenue hierarchy of the state. Being the highest revenue court, it hears appeals and is empowered to revise decisions in revenue cases.
- iii) It exercises general superintendence over the revenue of the state, from whichever source they may arise.
- iv) Board is the final authority under the Sales Tax Act, Excise Act, Prohibition Act and Agricultural Income Tax Act.
- v) The Board undertakes the settlement operation in the state under its jurisdiction. This is a function, which holds the key to peace and stability in the rural India.
- vi) The Board exercises large inspectorial duties. It inspects revenue department in Collectorates and Divisional Commissioners' offices.
- vii) In some states, the Chairman, Board of Revenue, writes annual confidential reports of the Divisional Commissioners and District Collectors.
- viii) In states, which do not have Divisional Commissioners, the Board comes in direct contact with district administration. This, *inter alia*, means that it assumes a more pervasive supervisory role in respect of them.
- ix) In general, the Board relieves the state government of a great deal of detailed work in the sphere of revenue administration and functions as an institutional adviser to government on a wide variety of matters.

14.5 FACTORS SHAPING THE SECRETARIAT – DIRECTORATE RELATIONSHIP

The Secretariat and the Directorate constitute two wheels of the governmental machinery. Unless they achieve a certain measure of coordination and cooperation, the ability of the machinery to deliver goods is hampered. Two sets of factors have played a dominant role in shaping the Secretariat-Directorate

relationship at the state level. Of these, *one* concerns the functioning of the Secretariat at a practical plane. The *second* is concerned with the expansion that has lately come about in the Secretariat –its role, personnel, number of administrative units of which it is comprised, and so on. Of course, the two factors are closely inter-related; it is to facilitate academic understanding of the matter that these are being dealt with separately here. It may be noted, it is these very factors which – as they work themselves out – generate situations, which tend to build up tension in the Secretariat-Directorate relationship.

Different Aspects of the Functioning of Secretariat

The institution of Secretariat has attracted considerable criticism. One cannot perhaps find fault with the Secretariat as a concept, for at a conceptual plane, it is meant to encourage division of labour (between policy making and policy executing agencies) and specialisation, which results from such compartmentalisation of work. Again, at a conceptual level, the idea of Secretariat is meant to promote delegation of authority from policy making to policy execution level. By implication, it discourages centralisation and concentration.

However, in practice, these advantages of the Secretariat system have failed to fully materialise. There is a large divergence between what is held to be valid in theory and what is achieved in practice. The manner of functioning of the Secretariat and its overbearing attitude have generated tensions in the Secretariat-Directorate relationship and adversely affected the advantages commonly ascribed to the Secretariat System.

The substantive points of criticism against the Secretariat, which have a bearing on its relationship with the executive departments, are placed below:

- i) The Secretariat has an expansionist attitude, meaning it has arrogated to itself functions, which do not belong to it. It does not confine itself to policy making; instead the Secretariat freely engages in matters of executive nature. This encroachment has materially weakened the authority of the executive agencies.
- ii) The Secretariat hesitates to delegate adequately to the Executive Agencies. As a result of this, the execution of policies is delayed. Besides, the initiatives of the Executive Agencies is cramped through the need for repeated consultations with, and approvals from, the Secretariat.
- iii) Scrutiny, in the Secretariat, of proposals submitted by the heads of the Executive Departments begins at the clerical level. This procedure is dilatory. Besides, it undermines the authority of the heads. As is well-known, the proposals of the heads of the departments are based on proposals received from the district and regional level officers and are submitted to the Secretariat after a detailed scrutiny in the Attached Offices. If, therefore, these proposals are to be subjected to further scrutiny, it leads to unnecessary duplication and delay.
- iv) More substantively, the very idea of the generalist administrators (who staff the Secretariat) overseeing, superintending and evaluating the work of specialists and technocrats (who staff the Executive Agencies) is out of place in the modern technological age. And, it is all the more untenable that the Secretariat should scrutinise the proposals and schemes emanating from the attached offices, the argument being that the lay generalists have possibly nothing to contribute in such an exercise.

The above-noted situations, coupled with the fact that Secretariat has come to be identified with the real power structure in the governmental system (it is, in fact, considered 'the government') have unduly inflated the influence and authority of the Secretariat and aggravated tensions between the Secretariat and Executive Departments. The importance of Secretariat has got further enhanced since, as

previously noted, it delves into the questions not only of policy (which constitute its legitimate sphere) but also those of execution. It has thus expanded its functional area through large, unauthorised encroachments in the executive sphere. This is, quite obviously, at the expense of the executive offices and only further adds to tension between the Secretariat and Executive Agencies. Another situation, which must be noted in this regard, is the easy access, which Secretariat officers enjoy with the political executive. There is no gain saying the fact that this, in its own way, contributes to the existing tensions between the Secretariat and Attached Offices. We shall be discussing the factors that have been responsible for bringing about expansion in the role of the Secretariat and an increase in its personnel and the number of administrative units of which it is comprised. After all, it is partly this expansion, which is at the root of the Secretariat-Directorate tensions. These factors are set out below:

Factors Responsible for Expansion in the Secretariat

The foremost of these is the parliamentary system of government. The principle of legislative accountability – under which the minister is, *inter alia*, supposed to answer questions, concerning his department, on the floor of the house – has brought about centralisation of functions in the Secretariat. Also, easy access of ministers to their constituents generates pressures on ministers in regard to matters such as appointments, promotions, transfers, and so forth. Now, clearly, these are matters of executive nature. The ministerial desire to nurture his constituency (and therefore, respond to demands for appointments, etc.) results in the minister's involvement in executive matters. This is how the Secretariat, a policy making body, becomes involved in the matters of policy execution.

The second factor, which has been responsible for a steady and substantial increase in the volume of work in the Secretariat is the governmental policy to develop the economy through planning and state intervention and a whole host of welfare functions with the government in recent years has assumed. Every effort at directing and administering the economy leads to increased volume of work in the government. Secretariat, in particular, has gained in stature and influence from this situation. The reason for this is that more important work as well as decisions commanding wide impact have devolved on the Secretariat.

Two factors account for this. *First*, the generalist secretaries are thought to possess a breadth of vision and a well-rounded experience, which comes from the varied job placements that an IAS officer is typically exposed to in the course of his career. In contrast, the head of the department is considered narrow in vision and too theoretical in approach. *Secondly*, the ministerial staff in the Secretariat is considered to be of a higher calibre as compared to that in the Attached Offices. The result is that the Secretariat attracts more business. *Thirdly*, as noted above, not an insignificant portion of growth in the Secretariat is due to its taking over numerous executive functions and multifarious unimportant tasks, which do not properly belong to it. *Finally*, some expansion is also due to the tendency of the bureaucracy to proliferate in any situation. The Secretariat is, thus, today encumbered with non-essential work and has become unwieldy and overstaffed.

14.6 THE BASES OF ADVOCACY OF THE TWO

The foregoing discussion provided us the perspective in which the question of relationship between the Secretariat and Directorates may be considered. The issues in this relationship will emerge more clearly if the arguments in favour of Secretariat and those in favour of Directorates are summed up:

Arguments in Favour of Secretariat

- The Secretariat is an essential administrative institution. The Secretariat System of work, with all its deficiencies, has lent balance, consistency and

continuity to the administration and has served as a nucleus of the total machinery of a Ministry. It has facilitated inter-ministry coordination and accountability to the Parliament at the ministerial level.

- The Secretariat System helps to separate policy making from policy execution. This is a welcome thing to happen with the Secretariat concentrating on the long-term policy issues and the executive agencies being given the freedom to implement policies. It has encouraged division of work, specialisation, and above all, delegation of authority.
- Since the Secretariat is required to concentrate on policy-making alone, it is able to achieve freedom from involvement in matters of detailed, day-to-day administration. This helps the Secretariat to remain forward-looking and plan in terms of the overall, aggregative national objectives.
- The generalist secretary, who is the kingpin of the system, is uniquely suited to advise the minister, who is a layperson. The secretary is, on the one hand, able to keep the exalted fervour of the specialist head of the department in check, and on the other, tender objective advice to the minister, examining proposals submitted by the head from a larger viewpoint of the government as a whole.
- The existence of Secretariat ensures objective evaluation of programme implementation in the field. This task cannot be left to the executive agencies, which actually implement policies, for they should not be asked to judge their own performance. The Secretariat is best suited to do this job.
- Overall, the Secretariat is an institution of proven merit. It has stood the test of time and successfully delivered goods; the combination of 'tenure system' and a permanent 'office', which has been evolved as a part of the system has given it strength, vitality and dynamism. There is no viable substitute in sight for the Secretariat System.

Arguments in Favour of Directorates

- Unlike the Secretariat, the Directorates are staffed by specialists who have achieved excellence in their respective specialisations. These specialists have, moreover, over the years, been able to gather an intimate knowledge of the field conditions. By virtue of these facts, the director or the head of the department, it is argued, is comfortably placed to discharge the role of tendering policy advice to the Minister. This will permit fuller projection of the Director's experience in the policy-making process.
- As the specialists rise in the functional hierarchy, they are able to acquire a valuable administrative experience. This coupled with the fact that they are, by virtue of their training, well-versed in the technical aspects of the policy issues and could provide the head of the departments a superior equipment – as compared with the generalist secretaries – to tender advice on policy matters. The argument, in other words, is that the heads combine with administrative experience the valuable technical know how, which the secretaries lack.
- As science and technology makes rapid advances, the volume and complexity of governmental activity of a technical and scientific character has been on the increase. And, with this, specialised areas of administrative activity have emerged in the government. The specialist heads of departments are uniquely suited to respond to this situation.
- The specialist heads of departments alone, rather than the generalist secretaries, are in tune with the modern trend of specialisation and professionalism in the government. There is virtually no professional area, it is argued, which is not represented in the government today. Pure sciences, medicine, veterinary science, engineering, agricultural science, architecture, and accountancy are some of the examples of this trend.

14.7 EMERGING PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SECRETARIAT AND DIRECTORATES

What might be a suitable pattern of relationship between the Secretariat and non-Secretariat organisation? On the question of evolving a suitable pattern, broadly three schools of thought are discernible. Each adopts a different approach. Neither yields a conclusive answer for, as we shall see in the ensuing discussion, it is possible to list arguments for as well as against the arrangement each proposes. Based on their dominant thrust, the three schools of thought or approaches may be referred to as:

- i) The Status-quo Approach,
- ii) The Bridging-the-gulf Approach, and
- iii) The De-amalgamation Approach.

14.7.1 The Status-quo Approach

The Status-quo Approach favours the traditional split system and holds that the Secretariat and the Directorates have well-defined roles in our administrative setup to which they should continue to stick. The approach is based on the traditional concepts of staff-line dichotomy where the secretariat performs the role of a Staff Agency and the Attached Office that of the Line Agency. The Status-quo Approach also accepts the traditional policy-administration dichotomy. The advocates of this approach believe that the relationship between the Secretariat and Directorates should be based on the following principles:

- i) Policy-making should be the responsibility of the Secretariat and Policy implementation that of the Directorates.
- ii) Subject to the rules governing the conditions of service, the Head of Department should have fullest control over the personnel under him.
- iii) The Secretariat Department should provide common services and undertake domestic housekeeping in respect of the Directorate(s) attached to it (for instance, the allocation of office accommodation).

Arguments For

The advocates of Status-quo Approach justify the existence of separate agencies for policy formulation and policy implementation on the following grounds:

- i) Persons responsible for the execution of policy must not be entrusted with the responsibility for the assessment of its achievements and failures.
- ii) Agency concerned with execution of policy remains so much engrossed in details that it may lack a broad outlook necessary for the framing of a policy.
- iii) When schemes framed by specialists are scrutinised by the generalists, it gives these schemes a broader orientation and greater objectivity.
- iv) Separation encourages delegation and decentralisation. It also provides for division of work between the Secretariat and Directorate.
- v) Split system has the important merit of being a familiar arrangement. Besides, it is a system of proven effectiveness; it has, till now, delivered the goods. It has stood the test of time. Its scrapping will break continuity with the past.

Arguments Against

Arguments against the traditional split system are too well-known to need any detailed cataloguing. Briefly, these are as follows:

- i) Schemes are processed twice in two different offices, which causes avoidable delays

- ii) Scrutiny of schemes in Secretariat begins at the assistant's level; who is hardly qualified to scrutinise the schemes framed by heads. The assistant's notings tend to confuse the issues and lead to unnecessary queries. In the process, the original intentions underlying the schemes get distorted and obscured.
- iii) More fundamentally, the critics of the split system point out, it is doubtful if generalist secretaries have the necessary know-how to undertake examination of the schemes prepared by qualified specialists; whether they may, in fact, be expected to make a worthwhile contribution to this exercise.
- iv) Split system is also criticised on the ground that it is inegalitarian in outlook. That it makes the Attached Office feel like an inferior entity far removed from the charmed circle. One result of this could be a low sense of participation among the personnel of Attached Offices.

Check Your Progress 2

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

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

- 1) Enumerate important arguments in favour of Status-quo Approach.

- 2) Why is Status-quo Approach not favoured these days?

14.7.2 The Bridging-the-gulf Approach

As against the School advocating Status-quo Approach there is another, which advocates measures for bridging-the-gulf between the Secretariat and Non-secretariat organisations. Its protagonists suggest various devices for bridging-the-gulf. These include (i) the conferment of ex-officio secretariat status on the heads of Executive Departments; (ii) the system under which a Secretary concurrently holds the office of the head of the Executive Department; (iii) the merger or amalgamation device under which an Executive Department is placed in a corresponding Secretariat Department; and (iv) a device which is a variant of (point iii), involving, once again, merger or amalgamation, but under this device, the Secretariat Department is placed with the corresponding Head of the Department, rather than the other way around. Each of these methods is in turn discussed below:

Ex-Officio Secretariat Status

Meaning

This device consists the conferment of a suitable ex-officio secretariat status on the heads of Executive Departments. The result is that by virtue of holding office as a

head, the incumbent of the (head's) position holds a suitable rank in the Secretariat. The clear advantage is that the two offices (those of the Director and Secretary) are now combined in a single individual. The Director, by virtue of being an ex-officio secretary, can sign on behalf of the government. The need for scrutiny of schemes in two offices is done away with. The same individual, in his capacity as Director, proposes the scheme and, in his capacity as Secretary, scrutinises it. This is, of course, an over-simplified description of the ex-officio system, but this is how, in essence, it functions. Thus, to take an example, in some states, the Chief Conservator of Forests is an ex-officio Secretary to the state government in the Department of Forest and Environment. To take an example from the Central Government, the Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is an ex-officio Additional Secretary to the Government of India.

Advocacy by State Level Administrative Reforms Committees

The Administrative Reforms Committees appointed by certain state governments have from time to time recommended conferment of ex-officio secretariat status on the heads of the Executive Departments. It would be helpful to pause at this stage to take a brief look at their recommendations; the exercise will *inter alia* assist us in analysing the advantages or the merits, which particular state governments ascribe to the ex-officio system.

The Andhra Pradesh Administrative Reforms Committee (ARC) (1964-65) recommended conferment of the ex-officio status as a method of achieving psychological closeness between the Secretariat and Directorates. The device, the Committee felt, would make the head of department feel a part and parcel of the broad-based (governmental) team – comprising its two major organisational components; the Secretariat and the Directorate – which is entrusted with a common task. It would remove the feeling of 'separateness' on the part of the head and ensure his fuller association in the Secretariat's policy formulation work. The Committee recommended conferment of the secretariat status on 23 heads but opined that, to start with, the secretariat status be given "only to those who are doing important work and spending large amounts' particularly on work connected with development activities."

The Punjab ARC (1964-66) recommended conferment of secretariat status as a method of ensuring adequate financial and administrative powers to the heads of the executive departments. The Kerala Administrative Reorganisation and Economy Committee (1965-67) recommended conferment of appropriate secretariat status on the heads of departments to achieve "better quality of work and the *esprit de corps* that follow from the psychological satisfaction that such status would give to the Heads of Departments." The Committee recommended the grant of the ex-officio secretariat status to 55 officials of the Executive Departments.

The Rajasthan ARC (1962-63) had recommended the adoption of the ex-officio system on an experimental basis. It proposed that the government may, to begin with, make the Chief Engineer, Public Works Department (Buildings and Roads), and the Director of Industries and Supplies, ex-officio Additional Secretaries to the government. And that it may, later, extend the system to other departments.

Arguments For

- i) When the Head of Department has an ex-officio secretariat status, he can make decisions, and sign, on behalf of the government. This permits much economy of time since the matter does not have to move up the secretariat for finalisation. The twin roles of Secretariat and Directorate are now performed by a single functionary; the making of the proposal (a Head of

- Department function) and its scrutiny consideration, and sanction (a Secretariat Function), both the roles are performed by the same functionary.
- ii) The Head of Department is more closely involved in the policy making process. This means that his experience is more adequately projected in policy formulation. Also, more desirable policy implementation is possible since the Head of Department, under this arrangement, develops fuller awareness of the considerations, which underly a policy.
 - iii) Overall, the Head of Department gains in status and weight. He achieves a particular facility and speed in handling matters and making decisions. The overall efficacy of the governmental system to deliver goods is enhanced. Bureaucratic procedures become de-emphasised; a programmatic bias and a performance orientation is achieved.

Arguments Against

- i) Integration is apt to blur the line of demarcation between the functions of policy-making and policy-implementation. As a result, the task of long-term policy making is liable to be neglected because the day-to-day operational problems are likely to induce a sense of urgency about them.
- ii) Not only the policy formulation work per se will suffer, but also the short-term considerations may overwhelm the strategic ones and deprive policy making of the long-term content.
- iii) Integration may also affect the programme implementation adversely. This is because the executive officers have, as such, plenty to do in the fields; their involvement in the secretariat work will overburden them.
- iv) Government will be deprived of the advantage of a broad and balanced scrutiny of the policy proposals when a technocrat takes over the Secretariat functions.
- v) Integration violates the fundamental principle of the Secretariat System, namely policy-making that must remain separated from policy implementation.
- vi) Indiscriminate conferment of the secretariat status will debase the value of the secretariat designations and, at the same time, undermine the authority of such functionaries of the Executive Agencies that do not have the secretariat status.

Concurrent Appointment of Secretary as the Head of the Executive Agency

We have referred to the ex-officio Secretariat System earlier. Under this, an appropriate secretariat status is conferred upon the head of the Executive Department. The reverse is also done; namely a Secretary is concurrently appointed as head of the Attached Office. In this way, a single functionary is made responsible for both, policy formulation as well as policy implementation with the assistance of a common office located in the Secretariat. Some examples of this could be cited from the Central government; Joint Secretary in the Department of Labour and Employment (Ministry of Labour, Employment and Rehabilitation) is concurrently the Director-General of Employment and Training. Similarly, Additional Secretary in the Department of Food (Ministry of Food and Agriculture) is also the Director-General of Food.

The advantage of this system is clear enough; namely, it helps to eliminate the distance between the Secretariat and the Attached Office. But, at the same time, the system blurs the distinction between the Secretariat and the Head of the Department. A comprehensive projection of the system throughout the country could only take place if the view is held that the Secretariat as such has no longer a role apart from that of the executive head.

Amalgamation of Directorate with Secretariat

Terms like integration, merger and amalgamation have been interchangeably used to suggest an arrangement under which the distinction between the Secretariat and the Non-secretariat Organisations is completely dissolved. Under this system, the office of the heads of the Executive Agencies is merged with the corresponding departments in the Secretariat.

The advocacy of amalgamation is based on the argument that the encroachment of the Secretariat into the Executive Functions, is in any case, an established fact of the Indian administrative landscape. This is so because the political executive in India is unable to devote adequate attention to policy functions. Instead, it preoccupies itself rather quite excessively with matters of day-to-day nature (like appointments, promotion, and transfers, for instance). As a result, the Secretariat itself becomes involved in what are patently executive matters and which, therefore, should, in fact, fall in the domain of the Directorate, as ultimately the role of the Secretariat is governed by the role perceptions of the political executive. It is thus, argued that since the role of the two agencies anyhow overlap, amalgamation would be both logical as well as desirable.

Among the advocates of amalgamation, the ARC's team on "The Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedure of Work" has been most outstanding. It recommends abolition of the distinction between the Secretariat as the policy-making body and the Non-secretariat Organisations as the Executive Agencies based on an elaborate scheme of merger, which it has proposed. The idea is to provide for adequate interaction between the policy-making and the policy implementing agencies of the government and remove the undesirable distinction between the Secretariat and Non-secretariat parts of administration.

The ARC itself has, however, expressed itself against a general abolition of the distinction between the Secretariat and the Executive Agencies. It favours integration on a more restricted scale. It recommends integration with Secretariat of only those Executive Departments, which are concerned with development programmes. It suggests that policy-execution dichotomy should continue to be maintained in case of Executive Organisations concerned with regulatory, training, survey and research activities.

Amalgamation or integration involves placement of Non-secretariat organisations with executive duties functionally in the Secretariat without giving them any secretariat status. The heads of the Non-secretariat Organisations, which are amalgamated with the Secretariat retain their present designations, which indicate the nature of their functions. Under the integration arrangement, coordination between the "Non-secretariat Organisations part" and the "traditional part of the Secretariat" would be the responsibility of the Secretary.

Arguments For

Two state level ARCs have also favoured the idea of merger of the offices of the Heads of Departments with the State Secretariat.

The ARC of Andhra Pradesh, in the year 1960, recommend merger in view of "The increased workload in the context of larger and larger Five Year Plans and the urgency with which the plans had to be executed year by year."

This could be one advantage of effecting merger of the two offices, namely, it promised speedier execution of the development projects. Other advantages of merging the two offices, according to the ARC, could be as under:

- i) It permits continuous contact between the Secretariat and the Directorate.
- ii) It expedites sanction of schemes and staff.
- iii) It speeds up implementation of schemes and facilitates their periodic review.

The other state level committee to recommend the substitution of the two parallel hierarchies (Secretariat and Directorate) by an integrated composite office was the Madhya Pradesh ARC (1970-72). It ascribed following advantages to such an arrangement:

- i) This would encourage specialisation in the various aspects of administration.
- ii) It could be away with duplication (in scrutiny of schemes, for instance), cuts and delays.
- iii) The arrangement would help to improve the quality of performance and avoid dispersal of manpower and financial resources.

Arguments Against

The disadvantages of amalgamation would be similar to those of the preceding two methods discussed in this Section.

Amalgamation – The Second Model

In the merger device, which we have discussed earlier, the office of the head of the Executive Department is integrated with the corresponding Secretariat Department. The opposite also happens so that the Ministry's office is merged into the headquarters' organisation of the head of the Executive Department. Such a system was in operation in the Directorate-General of Posts and Telegraphs before the P&T Board was constituted. Here, the Ministry and the Executive Department have a common office and common files – all under the control of the Executive Department. This common office serves both, the officers of the Secretariat as well as those of the Executive Department. Same clerical staff puts up papers before both the levels of officers. A distinguishing feature of this arrangement is that, at the Secretariat level, all noting is done by officers of and above the rank of Under Secretary. This arrangement permits speedy disposal of cases and helps to effect sizeable economy in expenditure.

Its disadvantages are similar to those of the previously discussed three methods.

Check Your Progress 3

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Bring out the arguments in favour of the ex-officio device.

2) What are the advantages of the amalgamation device?

- 3) Enumerate the features of the second model of amalgamation device.

14.7.3 The De-amalgamation Approach

Why De-amalgamation? The Bihar Experience

How has merger or amalgamation worked in practice? Has it produced the desired results? Bihar is one state in the country where amalgamation was effected as far back as 1951. Empirical results are available from the Bihar experiment on amalgamation. There is a sharp division of opinion among the functionaries who have had the opportunity to work under amalgamated setup. A number of officials report that the scheme has been successful and has yielded good results. At the same time, a large number of officials have criticised the scheme and opined that it should be done away with. In other words, they feel that amalgamation has failed and the process of de-amalgamation should now be started.

Arguments for Continued Amalgamation

Those who report favourably on the experience of amalgamation argue as follows:

- i) Amalgamation has obviated the need for examination of proposals independently by the Directorate and Secretariat.
- ii) It has cut down delays and ensured expeditious disposal of cases.
- iii) It has effected economy in establishment expenditure.

Arguments for De-amalgamation

The officials who recommend de-amalgamation give the following arguments:

- i) Although amalgamation permits much economy of time in that it does away with two parallel scrutinies of proposals, the experience has shown that, under the amalgamated set up, the quality of final proposals/schemes has declined, which frequently involves reconsideration. This, they point out, was not so when Directorate and Secretariat functioned separately.
- ii) Amalgamation has resulted in gradual removal of distinction between the functions of the Heads of Departments and those of the Secretariat.
- iii) Amalgamation has rendered objective examination of proposals and schemes at the Secretariat level difficult. The secretaries have to write their notes on files in a guarded manner so as to avoid causing offence to the head of department. This extra caution often prevents a frank examination of the cases by the secretariat officers.
- iv) Under the amalgamation schemes, the Head of Department remains stuck up in the Secretariat. He is not able to go on tours and inspections, which are his main obligations.

What is Involved in Effecting De-amalgamation?

In 1979, Bihar decided to scrap the amalgamation or, in other words, to return to the traditional split system. However, Bihar has experienced difficulties in implementing the de-amalgamation plan. Difficulties have been mainly two-fold. First, during the three decades of amalgamation, there has been a unified cadre of the subordinate staff, i.e., for the Secretariat and the Heads of Departments. De-amalgamation involves separation of this unified cadre. Second, because of the

amalgamation of the Secretariat and Executive Department, no separate files had been maintained for the two sets of departments. De-amalgamation necessitated duplicating many files and documents.

In view of these difficulties, it was decided to enforce de-amalgamation in two stages. In the first stage, the heads were to confine themselves to field work alone, meaning they would curtail their involvement in the Secretariat duties. And, in the second stage, separation of cadres and files were planned. For these reasons, the process of de-amalgamation in Bihar could not be completed until 1982 although the decision to de-amalgamate was reached in the year 1979.

14.8 LET US SUM UP

Directorate is an executive agency charged with the role of translating the policies framed at the Secretariat level into concrete action. Directorates establish intermediate level administrative set up – between the headquarters and the districts – which coordinate and supervise field operations. This intermediate set up is called the regional administration. The Board of Revenue is an organisation at the headquarters to deal with the issues concerning the revenue administration of the state. It is an autonomous body with an existence distinct and separate from most of the state government machinery.

In the possible patterns of relationship between Secretariat and Directorate, we have, in this Unit, highlighted only the more prominent ones. The two agencies remain locked in a process of constant interaction. And, therefore, the relational patterns, which are generated, would be legion. As a quest for greater efficiency in government forges ahead, administrative experiments ensue in its wake. This leads to modifications and alterations in particular patterns and abandonment of others. And the old gives place to the new; the process is ongoing.

14.9 KEY WORDS

- Board** : A Board is a multi-headed extra-departmental organisation. It typically consists of a group of individuals, mainly specialists, who are collectively assigned the responsibility for carrying out a certain governmental function. A Board is preferred to a single head when quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial functions have to be performed. Under a Board type of organisation, it is possible to pool together the knowledge and experience of several individuals.
- Amalgamation** : This is one of the organisational devices to reduce the distance between Secretariat and Directorate. Under this arrangement, the distinction is completely dissolved by merging the office of the head with that of the Secretary.
- Bridging-the-gulf Approach** : This is a name given to a particular methodology, which is employed in remodelling the Secretariat-Directorate relationship. It seeks to reduce the distance between the two agencies through a number of organisational devices.

- De-amalgamation** : This is the negation of the amalgamation device. It seeks to do away with the integrated or amalgamated set up. Thereby, it aims to restore the traditional split system.
- Esprit de Corps** : Spirit of loyalty and devotion, which unites the members of a group or society.

14.10 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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14.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Attached Offices
 - Subordinate Offices
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Principle of legislative accountability that has led to centralisation of functions in the Secretariat.
 - The ministerial desire to nurture his/her constituency results in Minister's involvement in executive matters.
 - Increase in welfare functions of the government.
 - The ministerial staff in the Secretariat is considered to be of higher calibre.
 - Secretariat has become unweildy and overstaffed.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Separation of policy formulation and policy implementation.
 - Generalist scrutiny gives broader orientation to specialist's schemes.
 - The Approach encourages delegation, decentralisation and division of work.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - It leads to delays.
 - Scrutiny of schemes at the Assistant's level distorts the aims of the schemes.
 - According to technocrats, generalists do not have necessary know how to scrutinise the schemes made by them.
 - These schemes make Attached Offices feel inferior.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - The Head of Department has an ex-officio Secretariat status.

- He can take a decision and organise on behalf of the government.
- He is more closely involved with policy-making process.
- He gains in status and weight.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- It leads to speedier execution of the development projects.
- It permits continuous contact between the Secretariat and the Directorate.
- Speeds up implementation of schemes.
- Encourages specialisation in various aspects of administration.
- Reduces duplication in scrutiny of schemes.

3) Your answer should include the following points:

- Ministry and Executive Departments have a common office and common file.
- The Ministry and Executive Departments have common clerical staff.
- Nothing is done by officers of and above the rank of Under Secretary.
- The model helps in speedy disposal of cases.
- It helps to effect sizeable economy in expenditure.