

## CHAPTER X

### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

#### 136. Historical Background

The States of Patna, Sonapur and Sambalpur were conquered by the British in course of the Second Maratha war early in 1804. But these States were restored to the Raja of Nagpur in 1806. After the Third Maratha war, Patna and Sonapur along with Sambalpur and other neighbouring States came under permanent possession of the British. In consequence of this, a new administrative division was created in 1819 called the South Bihar and Chotanagpur Mahals and the Sambalpur group of States was included in it. In 1821 the British Government annulled the feudal supremacy of the Raja of Sambalpur on its dependencies including Patna and Sonapur. Accordingly, separate Sanads were granted to these States that year. By regulation III of 1833, the South-West Frontier Agency was organised under an Agent to the Governor-General with headquarters at Ranchi. Patna and Sonapur along with other States of Sambalpur group were included in the South-West Frontier Agency under the control of the Agent. The Agency was abolished by Act XX of 1854 and the Chotanagpur Province was constituted under a Commissioner whose jurisdiction extended over Patna, Sonapur, Sambalpur and other neighbouring States. In January 1861, the management of Patna, Sonapur and Sambalpur which was then no longer a princely State was transferred to the Superintendent of Tributary Mahals, Cuttack, but when the Central Province was constituted in November 1861, these States with Sambalpur formed part of the new Province. In 1863, Patna and Sonapur along with Rairakhol, Bamra and Kalahandi were declared Feudatory States and in 1867 Sanads were granted to them giving the Ruler's powers of life and death over their people, subject to confirmation of the Local Government. Thus from this time onward, the Feudatory Chiefs of Patna and Sonapur administered their own States with laws and regulations promulgated by themselves. In 1905, Sambalpur together with the States of Patna, Sonapur, Kalahandi and Rairakhol were taken from the Central Provinces and amalgamated with Orissa, while the States of Bamra and Gangpur were also taken from Chotanagpur and placed under Orissa. The privileges and status of the Feudatory Chiefs of these States were fully defined and recorded. Thus the Feudal Chiefs of Patna and Sonapur were the supreme heads of their respective States in all branches of administration and were known as the Maharajas. The pattern of administration in these two states was almost the same excepting minor differences. Each of the Maharajas vested in the Dewan the powers necessary to pursue day-to-day administration reserving to himself the decision of all important

matters of the State. In case of Sonapur, the Dewanship was abolished in 1912 when a State Secretary was appointed to manage administration and in Patna State a Chief Minister was appointed in 1936. A cabinet system of Government was introduced in Sonapur in 1942 when the post of State Secretary was abolished and a Chief Minister appointed. In each of the two ex-states, important matters of administration were referred to the State Cabinet of which the Maharaja and the Chief Minister was the President and the Vice President respectively. There were Ministers for Revenue, Judicial Administration and Development works.

Each of the States of Patna and Sonapur was divided into three subdivisions. The subdivisions of Patna were Balangir Sadar, Titilagarh and Patnagarh and those of Sonapur were Sonapur Sadar, Binka and Birmaharajpur. The subdivisions were under Subdivisional Officers who exercised both executive and judicial functions. The States had their respective High Courts and Sessions Courts, and in both the States the corpus of many British Indian laws were adopted while the spirit and principles of many others were followed with some modifications to suit local conditions.

In Sonapur, a Vichar Samiti or Advisory Assembly was established in 1931 consisting of 16 members of whom 8 were nominated and 8 elected. The Durbar amended the Vichar Samiti Order in 1943 to represent different interests viz., agricultural, social, commercial, etc. and to bring the people into close touch with the administration. There was also the village Panchayat system in the State through which the people could convey their grievances to the Ruler.

In Patna, village Panchayats were organised in 1939. Each Panchayat consisted of a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 11 members including the President. Besides village Panchayats, Praja Sabhas were formed in all the three subdivisions of the State. The duty of these Sabhas was to bring to the notice of the State authorities all matters of public interest. They consisted of 26 members in Balangir Sadar and 20 and 16 in the Titilagarh and Patnagarh subdivisions respectively, excepting the President, the proportion of elected and nominated members being half and half. The Patna Durbar established a Legislative Assembly in 1943 consisting of 28 members excluding the President, the Chief Minister being the *ex officio* President of the Assembly. Out of 28 members, 14 were nominated and 14 were elected. The Assembly had the right of interpellation including the right of putting supplementary questions. It had the power of making laws for the whole or part of the State and had the right of being consulted for new measures of

taxation. In 1947 the Maharaja formed a new cabinet consisting of four Ministers, two of whom were his nominees and the other two the representatives from each of the political parties Krushak Dal and Praja Mandal. After Independence, the Government of India took up the question of merger of Orissa States and subsequently all the States except Mayurbhanj merged with Orissa on the 1st January 1948. On that day the district of Balangir-Patna was formed comprising the ex-States of Kalahandi, Patna and Sonepur. But as this district was found unwieldy for purposes of administration the ex-States of Patna and Sonepur were separated on the 1st November, 1949 and the new district Balangir was formed comprising these two ex-States.

### 137. Present Administrative Set-up

(i) The general administration of the district is now vested in the Collector who also functions as Magistrate of the district. The District Officer, therefore, combines in him the responsibilities of carrying on the revenue administration as well as functions of the supreme magistrate of the district for maintenance of law and order. The Collector is assisted by an Additional District Magistrate who is also empowered under several laws to function as the district head. The present revenue administration of the district is not different from that prevailing in other districts of Orissa. The Collector is responsible for collection of land revenue and cesses in his district as well as for correct and up-to-date maintenance of revenue records. For the purposes of revenue administration, the district has been divided into five Tahsils one each in Balangir, Patnagarh and Titilagarh subdivisions and two in Sonepur subdivision. The Tahsil is the basic unit of revenue administration and is placed invariably under a Gazetted Officer designated as Tahsildar. He belongs to the cadre of the Orissa Administrative Service or Subordinate Administrative Service. Besides collection of revenue and maintenance of records, the Tahsildar has the powers of a Revenue Court for settlement of Nayabadi lands, lease of Government lands, mutation, encroachment, certificate and other miscellaneous revenue cases. Each Tahsil is divided for the purpose of collection of revenue into a number of circles each under a Revenue Inspector. A revenue circle comprises several revenue villages. In every Tahsil one or two revenue supervisors have been posted to supervise the work of Revenue Inspectors in the field. The Collector who is the head of the land revenue department at the district level is subject to the general control and superintendence of the Revenue Divisional Commissioner with headquarters at Sambalpur and of the Board of Revenue. The Collector has also appellate powers in matters of miscellaneous revenue cases arising out of a lower court of the Tahsildar or of the Subdivisional Officer. But as the Collector has many functions to perform, he transfers most of the appeal cases to the Additional District Magistrate retaining only

a few important ones in his own file. For co-ordination of various aspects of Revenue Administration as well as for effective control over the field officers, there is a Revenue Section in the Collectorate under the charge of an Officer of the Orissa Administrative Service or Subordinate Administrative Service. This is an important section of the Collectorate which needs constant and careful attention. But as the Collector is generally engrossed with a multitude of problems relating to general and developmental administrations, the Additional District Magistrate has been kept in over-all charge of the revenue matters in the district.

(ii) The Collector, as stated earlier, also functions as the Magistrate of the district. He is primarily responsible for the maintenance of law and order in his area. Till recently, he was the head of administration of criminal justice in the district. But after the separation of the Judiciary from the Executive on the 1st May 1967, the District Magistrate has lost most of his criminal powers enjoyed since the time of Warren Hastings. Yet he retains all powers under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code for prevention of breach of peace as well as for maintenance of law and order. Though limited, the powers are nevertheless most vital as they are designed to preserve peace in the area. The District Magistrate is also the general head of the Police Administration in the district, though there is a Superintendent of Police who is the departmental district head. Although the Superintendent of Police has independent powers and functions, it is his duty to apprise the District Magistrate, from time to time, of important matters pertaining to commission of crimes as well as to the problems affecting law and order situation in the district. The District Officer is the pivot of the general administration in the district.

(iii) The Collector has also been made responsible for the implementation of all development schemes and has been given full control over officers of various departments posted in the district. He is required to check their work and ensure that their work is purposeful. He has power to co-ordinate the activities of various departmental district heads so as to ensure an integrated and all-round development of the area. He also has the power to make an assessment of the work done by the district heads of some of the departments at the end of the year. Till recently, the Collector's attention was engaged mostly in the implementation of developmental schemes and the Additional District Magistrate, as pointed out earlier, was in charge of revenue administration subject, of course, to the Collector's control. The present scheme of developmental administration is a three-tier system comprising of the Grama Panchayat in the primary level, the Panchayat Samiti in the secondary level and the Zilla Parishad at the top. Development works are to be done through the agency of the Panchayat Samiti and the Zilla Parishad. The Zilla Parishad is also required to distribute

various allotments received from Government from time to time and to indicate the lines along which a particular scheme should be implemented: This system, no doubt, goes far in associating the public with the development administration of the area, but the role of the Collector becomes even more onerous, particularly in a backward district like Balangir. He is required to make various local bodies discharge their functions properly without appearing to be authoritarian. He has, no doubt, certain powers of control over these bodies but these powers are exercisable in exceptional cases only. An officer belonging to Class I of the Orissa Administrative Service functions as the Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad, whereas the Block Development Officer functions as the Executive Officer of the Samiti. The Collector not only assesses their performances annually but also supervises their work and takes steps to remove difficulties which they experience. The Ministerial staff of the Parishad and Samiti, however, belong to the same cadre as the Ministerial staff directly under the Collector and it is he who has powers of appointment and transfer of the staff. It has been mentioned earlier that the Collector has a general control over the working of other Departments in the district. Yet some Departments work directly under him. For example, the Grama Panchayat, the Tribal and Rural Welfare, the Publicity and Civil Supplies Departments have been placed directly under the Collector in view of their relative importance. The Welfare Department which has a network of programmes in the district has four Departmental Officers in the four subdivisions and another officer at the district headquarters. These Officers are known as Assistant District Welfare Officers. In addition to these Officers, there is also Class II Officer of the State Service to function as the District Welfare Officer of the district. His office is a part of the Collectorate. An ex-Cadre Officer designated as the District Public Relations Officer is in charge of the Publicity Wing of the Collectorate. An Officer of the Supply Department known as the Civil Supplies Officer works under the immediate control of the Collector. Similarly, Grama Panchayat matters are dealt with in a section of the Collectorate known as Grama Panchayat Section under the charge of an Officer of the Orissa Administrative Service or the Orissa Subordinate Administrative Service known as the District Panchayat Officer. The Excise Administration of the district is directly under the Superintendent of Excise but the Collector or the Additional District Magistrate on his behalf functions as the head of the Excise Administration. In Balangir, the Additional District Magistrate functions as the Collector in respect of Excise Administration except in the matters of policy which are attended to by the Collector himself.

(iv) There is a District Treasury at Balangir under the charge of an Officer of the Orissa Finance Service (Senior Branch) and there are three Sub-Treasuries functioning at the subdivisional headquarters at

Patnagarh, Titilagarh and Sonepur. The work of the cash sections of Balangir District Treasury and Titilagarh Sub-Treasury is managed by the State Bank of India. The District Magistrate looks into the affairs of the District Treasury and the Sub-Treasuries. In the Sub-divisions, the Subdivisional Officers are in over-all charge of the Sub-Treasuries whose monthly accounts are verified by them. The Additional District Magistrate is the *ex-officio* District Registrar. He is assisted by a District Sub-Registrar with headquarters at Balangir. There are local offices of the Sub-Registrar in the subdivisions.

(v) The office of the Collector is known as the Collectorate. It is the nerve centre of the district administration. It consists of several sections each under charge of a Deputy or a Sub-Deputy Collector. At times, an Officer is also kept in charge of more than one section. For the facility of supervision, some of the sections are under the Additional District Magistrate while others are directly under the Collector, although in matters of policy and over-all control, the Collector is deemed to have authority over all sections. The Government have sanctioned duty posts of six Deputy Collectors and four Sub-Deputy Collectors in the District Office but this number varies from time to time. Some of the important sections of the Collectorate are Revenue, General, Judicial, Development, Election, Census, Record Room, Library, Forms and Stationery, Nizarat, Loans, Land acquisition, Welfare, Publicity, Grama Panchayat and Land Records. Each section is kept under the charge of a senior assistant and there is an Office Superintendent for the entire Collectorate whose duty it is to co-ordinate and control the activities of various sections in the District Office. The Office Superintendent is the head ministerial officer of the Collectorate. The Additional District Magistrate who is generally a stationary officer looks after the internal administrative affairs of the Collectorate subject, of course, to the general control of the Collector. The routine matters are disposed of by the Additional District Magistrate who refer important matters to the Collector for his decision.

(vi) For administrative convenience, the district has been divided into four subdivisions each under charge of a Subdivisional Officer who belongs to the cadre of the Orissa Administrative Service. At times, Junior Officers of the Indian Administrative Service are also kept in charge of subdivisions. Like the District Magistrate, the Subdivisional Officers also used to function till recently as Subdivisional Magistrates. But after separation of the Judiciary from the Executive, they now function as Magistrates of the First Class with powers under preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code. They are responsible for the maintenance of law and order in their respective areas. In the subdivision of Balangir, the Subdivisional Officer is assisted by a number of Sub-Deputy Collectors according

to the cadre strength fixed for disposal of criminal, revenue and certificate cases. There are nine Revenue Inspectors who are the main collecting agents. Besides collection of land revenue and maintenance of records, the Revenue Inspectors are also entrusted with the responsibility of enquiring into miscellaneous Revenue petitions. There are six Community Development Blocks in Balangir subdivision. The Subdivisional Officer of Patnagarh is assisted by two Sub-Deputy Collectors out of whom one is designated as the Revenue Officer and the other as Tahsildar. The Revenue Officer who is usually a Magistrate of the First Class is entrusted with the disposal of criminal cases under the preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code. There are four Revenue Inspectors in the Tahsil of Patnagarh the area of which is coterminous with that of the subdivision. The subdivision consists of three Community Development Blocks with headquarters at Patnagarh, Khaprakhoj and Belpara. In the subdivision of Sonapur, which consists of two Tahsils, there are nine Revenue Inspectors. The Tahsildar who is stationed at Birmaharajpur has also Magisterial powers and he disposes of criminal cases in addition to the normal revenue cases. There are six Community Development Blocks in the subdivision with headquarters at Tarbha, Ullunda, Birmaharajpur, Binka, Sonapur and Dunglepali. In the subdivision of Titilagarh, the cadre strength of the Gazetted Officers is four besides the Subdivisional Officer. There are five Community Development Blocks in the subdivision, viz., Titilagarh, Saintala, Turekela, Muribahal and Bangomunda. Each Block is kept under the charge of a Gazetted Officer known as Block Development Officer. The office of the Subdivisional Officer is a mini ture Collectorate. He has practically all the sections of the Collectorate in his office. The Subdivisional Officer represents the Collector in his Subdivision and has general control over the Subdivisional staff of the other departments as well as of the Panchayat Samitis and Grama Panchayats in his subdivision. His powers correspond to the Collector's in respect of the subdivision, although the Collector has certain additional powers which can not be delegated to the Subdivisional Officers. He is directly responsible for the smooth implementation of the programmes of the Panchayat Samitis and proper land revenue administration by the Tahsildar. The Subdivisional Officers of the district of Balangir have, in addition, the responsibility under the Orissa Merged States Laws Act to enquire into every petition by a member of any Scheduled Tribe praying for permission to transfer whole or part of his holding to a non-member of the Scheduled Tribe. He is the competent authority under this law either to permit the transfer or reject the application. He may also, on his own motion or on the application by the heirs of any previous transferor, enquire into the authority of the

transfer and restore it to the person he considers entitled to it. In respect of his subdivision, he has powers of control and supervision over the Police.

(vii) There are several other offices of the Government of Orissa which function under the immediate control of their district level heads. Appendix 'A' will indicate the names of Officers who have their offices at the district headquarters of Balangir. A few Government of India Offices as mentioned below are also functioning:—

1. The office of the District Engineer, Railways (Balangir)
2. Income-Tax Office at Titilagarh
3. Office of the Superintendent of Posts and Telegraphs, Balangir
4. Meteorological Observatory Centre at Titilagarh



## APPENDIX 'A'

**State level Officers stationed at the district headquarters of Balangir**

1. District Agricultural Officer
2. District Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer
3. District Statistical Officer
4. District Labour Officer
5. Assistant Commissioner, Commercial Taxes (Appellate)
6. Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad
7. Commercial Tax Officer (Balangir Circle)
8. Superintendent of Excise
9. Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies
10. Civil Supplies Officer
11. Inspector of Schools (Balangir Circle)
12. District Inspector of Schools
13. District Social Educational Organiser
14. Regional Marketing Officer, Balangir
15. District Transport Manager
16. District Public Relations Officer
17. District Panchayat Officer
18. Divisional Forest Officer
19. Divisional Forest Officer, Afforestation
20. Civil Surgeon
21. Superintendent of Police
22. District Judge
23. Executive Engineer, Rural Engineering Organisation
24. Executive Engineer, Public Works Department
25. Executive Engineer, Electrical

26. District Welfare Officer
27. District Health Officer
28. District Industries Officer
29. District Employment Officer
30. Malaria Unit Officer
31. Superintendent of Fisheries
32. Assistant Soil Conservation Officer
33. Mining Officer
34. District National Statistical Officer
35. Treasury Officer

**MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Principal, Rajendra College, Balangir
2. Principal, Gram Sevak Talim Kendra
3. Agent, State Bank of India