

## CHAPTER - 7

### DISTRICT PANCHAYATS

**2.7.1** Section 24 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994 contemplates the constitution of District Panchayat for each district having jurisdiction over Panchayat Unions and Village Panchayats. This is the first highest tier of the Rural Local Bodies as envisaged in the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India. Accordingly, the Tamil Nadu Government have constituted District Panchayats in all the districts in their G.O. Ms. No.100, Rural Development Department, dated 13-4-1995. The Collectors have been appointed as Special Officers and the Project Officer, DRDA is now holding the post of Chief Executive Officer. The Government have transferred the employment-oriented programmes which were being executed through DRDA to the District Panchayats, and the related funds have also been placed at the disposal of District Panchayats. The role of the District Panchayats, as envisaged in the Act is only advisory in character and watching the progress of the schemes in the Panchayat Unions and Panchayats. and also to advise on matters on which the Government need advice from the District Panchayats. The G.O. has however entrusted the monitoring of employment-oriented schemes to the District Panchayats and also placed at the disposal of DPs the officers and staff working under the control of DRDA and also some of the officers from the Collectorate. Paragraph 12 of the G.O. indicates that all expenditure relating to implementation of programmes and expenditure on staff shall be debited to the DP General Fund and that further additions to DP General Fund shall be based on the recommendations of SFC.

**2.7.2.** The role of District Panchayat and the activities earmarked among DP, PU and VP in respect of the 29 items indicated in Schedule 11 to 73rd Amendment to the Constitution, duly incorporated in the new Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994, have not yet been finalised. The existing scenario is that, DPs will operate the employment-oriented schemes like JVVT etc. transferred as per the above G.O. In respect of these programmes, provisions have already been made in the Budget for the schemes as well as for the cost of staff involved. The entire money will therefore be flowing to the General Fund of DPs as per the district allocation now being made by the Government. As far as the additions to DP General Fund are concerned, SFC has taken the view that out of the total allocations to be made by State Government to the Local Bodies, after dividing such allocation between Urban and Rural as per the norms proposed by SFC, the amount needed for the actual expenditure of the DPs will be retained out of Rural allocation and the balance will be distributed to PUs and VPs. on principles proposed by SFC. The amount retained for DPs will be distributed as Block Grant. In this context, the probable expenditure needed for a DP has to be evolved which will again depend on the role of DP to be decided by the Government. However the DRD has given some indications of the

requirements of the staff. This has been projected for the year 1997-98 and indicated as Rs.21 lakhs. Projection for subsequent years upto 2001-2002 has also been furnished. It appears that the staff covered by and JVVT and other employment programmes have been included in this estimate but, for them provision is already available in respective budget of the government and they have been distributed to DPs already. The amount needed over and above that for the new set up has not been clearly indicated. However, recently Government have distributed funds to District Panchayats to an extent of Rs.1 crore each for 1996-97. Taking this as guidelines, devolution of block grant to District Panchayats is discussed in Part V of the Report. The suggestion for assignment of Local cess to DPs and block grants to meet actual needs could be the recommendations of the SFC for the time being. When Devolution of functions and the new setup of the DPs office is known the amount further required can be reappropriated from the total pool intended for Rural.

### **2.7.3. Recommendations:**

#### **The SFC recommended the following:**

The suggestion for assignment of Local cess to DPs and block grants taking the distribution made for 1996-97 to District Panchayats by Government at Rs.1 crore each as guidelines to meet actual needs could be the recommendations of the SFC for the time being. When devolution of functions and the new set up of the DPs office is known the amount further required can be reappropriated from the total pool intended for Rural.