

Abstract

The public administration system of Bangladesh is characterized by pyramidal structure, following the traditional model of public administration where the policymakers at the central level take decisions or formulate a policy and the responsibility goes to the field administration at the local level to implement the decision/policy. The system has reminded largely the same as set up by the colonial rulers and left by them towards the middle of the last century. As the Office of the Divisional Commissioner is the apex organization of the field administration, the office has to play a significant role. The office has to monitor and supervise the field level offices regarding implementation of government policies at the field. On the other hand, it has to maintain liaison with the ministries and give feedback of the implementation of the policies and programs of the government. The Office of Divisional Commissioner has rich historical origins and has evolved over time taking over different functions under different eras.

In the present bureaucratic system the Ministry at the top is passing government orders to the field. Offices of the Deputy Commissioner are in the field to implement those. In between these two, from field administration perspective, Bangladesh is divided into six distinct geographical areas called Divisions. At present Bangladesh is divided into six administrative divisions namely *Dhaka*, *Chittagong*, *Rajshahi*, *Khulna*, *Barisal* and *Sylhet* each composed of several districts.

The history of civil service of the sub-continent depicts that, after the emergence of Collectors because of lack of central monitoring over revenue and judicial factors the British rulers created the post of Divisional Commissioner. The office lost some of its judicial power during the British period and forced to concentrate on land factors only. In the Pakistan era revenue responsibility of the office reduced remarkably but on the other hand the office was entrusted with huge development works. After these cutting and adding of responsibilities, the office got all the supreme authority of revenue, development and judiciary soon after the independence of Bangladesh. But with the course of time the office again lost its development and judiciary authority. Now the basic concentration of the office at present is land and monitoring field administration.

The office has to perform three basic responsibilities. Revenue which also includes land factors is one of those. Along with that development and coordination which includes administration and maintaining law and order are the other sectors. At present revenue and land is the most important responsibility that the office is performing. Then the factor of administration comes because the office is engaged in monitoring the field administration. At present the less important factor is maintaining the law and order situation.

After 1947 India has further enhanced the authority and supremacy of the office at field administration and all other departments working at the field level. By doing so, they have ultimately succeeded and achieved good result in both governance and economy. Pakistan on the other hand abolished the office few years ago and found it very difficult to implement government policies. Now the government of Pakistan is reviving the office to bring administrative balance. Bangladesh also reduced the authority of the office but not to the extent of Pakistan.

Basically the empowerment in development and revenue field has been found to be the most important area that should be the target for that office to be improved. As a whole the respondents of the study who are basically mid and top level civil servants also suggested for empowering and strengthening the authority of the Divisional Commissioner.