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FIFTY YEARS OF RURAL WELFARE ADMINISTRATION: A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF CHANDRAPUR ZILLA PARISHAD (1961–2011)

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Abstract
With the title 'Fifty Years of Rural Welfare Administration: A Historical Review of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad (1961 – 2011),' it brings the researcher on board, involves analyzed history, function and contribution of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad for rural development and execution of rural welfare administration for fifty years. In drought-stricken areas of Maharashtra, with democratic decentralisation having created this institution, the Zilla Parishad has played a key role in delivering aid from government policies and socioeconomic development. It considers the development of the institution and its governance, its organizational structures, leadership, financial resources and the most important welfare programmes which were introduced between 1961 and 2011. It is in education, public health, rural infrastructure, sanitation, agricultural development, poverty alleviation/social welfare that its efforts stand out. The second study also investigates the changing character of local government institutions-to-State administration linkages; the effects of decentralized planning and participatory governance in enhancing the quality of rural governance, is also explored. In addition, it highlights the difficulties and problems related to implementation, inequalities, administrative restrictions and financial constraints that may have impacted the effectiveness of welfare programmes. This research is historical and descriptive research that resulted from secondary data derived from government reports, administrative documents, government publications and literature. Overall, the study aims to document the successes, limitations and changing priorities of the Chandrapur Zilla Parishad, and consequently has valuable implications for the evolution of the institutional landscape of rural welfare administration in Maharashtra since Independence.

Keywords: Chandrapur Zilla Parishad, Rural Welfare Administration, Rural Development, Democratic Decentralisation, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Local Self-Government, Socioeconomic Development, Maharashtra, Historical Review, Public Administration.

Introduction

Since the independence of India, administration of rural welfare has proclaimed itself as one of the key roles in the socio-economic rejuvenation of the Indian order. In India, whose bulk population was engaged in rural occupations, the importance of local participation,

decentralised nature of governance and the effective response to the needs of rural population through institutional mechanisms is recognised. The rural development has many aspects such as education, healthcare, sanitation, development of agriculture and rural infrastructure and generation of employment, reduction of poverty, social justice etc. Administrative institutions are necessary to ensure that these programmes can respond to the needs and must be able to mobilise the resources, coordinate development activities and be able to take care of the equitable distribution of the public benefits in order to make effective use of these programmes. Panchayati Raj and grass root administration is an important tool of democratic decentralisation in this context which gets adequate role from the Panchayat Raj organisation. Formation of Zilla Parishads in Maharashtra was one of the significant steps in passing on the rural administration as an institutional mechanism for providing a link at the Zilla level for coordination in the development field. The administration of rural welfare in Chandrapur Zilla Parishad to a large extent represents longterm research in the field of the development of rural welfare administration. This applies to a 50 year period from 1961 to 2011, over which the focus of institutions, changes in priorities and policy positions, administrative adaptations have happened, and although the emphasis on rural service delivery remained and shifted over the timescale, overall the orientation has gradually shifted over this period. It was also a crucial time because the functions of local administration began to increasingly expand and have little to no self-governing institutions.

The recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee on democratic decentralisation and involvement of local communities in development planning, gave a big push to the development of Panchayati Raj in Maharashtra. The act of Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samitis, 1961 provided a statutory framework to implement the three tier Panchayati Raj from Maharashtra State based on the recommendations of V. P. Naik Committee. Incorporation of institutional structure started since 1st May 1962; Rural administration was given more powers to local government. In this context, Chandrapur Zilla Parishad became an important organization in the aspects of translation of the state development policies to the local development programmes; and the facilitation that Zilla Parishad gave to the local communities in the execution of their various activities. It was responsible for primary education, the extension of services delivered to rural communities, agricultural extension, village infrastructure, construction of drinking water and sanitation, social welfare and other activities put under its charge by the laws and government policies. The roles worked generally so far as they were being delivered in an administrative way, with funding, with inter-agency co-ordination and with elected leadership and community involvement in the roles. Therefore, analyzing the historical development of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad could help in understanding the role of decentralized institutions in rural development and how their role has evolved to meet new demands of the society and the economy.

Apart from the above important changes in rural development policies in India, the 50 year span from 1961 to 2011 also saw a lot of changes in policy in India. During the early decades a proper emphasis was given to provision of basic services like infrastructure, agricultural productivity, educational facilities, provision of public services etc. The themes of poverty alleviation, employment creation, women empowerment, social inclusion, participatory

development began to be present in the rural welfare administration in the later period. The Panchayat Raj for local self government and strengthening of the framework of democratic decentralisation, regular elections, referring of depressed class and local level planning (73rd Constitutional Amendment Act,1992) will be in effect in 1993 and has constitutional provisions to strengthen access to Panchayat Raj. Other administrative arrangements which the Zilla Parishads executed were also subjected to changes. The district of Chandrapur which has a diverse range of rural settlements, livelihoods of the farmers and forest dependent people, and infrastructure, and different accesses to various public service, showed more significance of district level administration. Therefore, the role of the Zilla Parishad should not only be considered based on programmes undertaken but also on their accessibility, continuity and suitability to local needs in view of the possibility of administrative inefficiency. With this dimension analysis, the link between institutional development and rural communities welfare can be formed.

The objective of the Historical Survey on Chandrapur Zilla Parishad 1961-2011 is to record the history of the formation, structure, developmental focus, role of the service providers for rural welfare etc. It also takes into account the difficulties of resource mobilization, the intergovernmental coordination, the implementation of the programmes, accountability, and provision for equality in access to public services. A Historical approach helps to determine the differences in administration, the impact of government decisions and the continuity of development focus throughout history. A review like this is useful because otherwise, the value of the school and its shortcomings may be understated without the historical context and evocation of context. The text is based upon any relevant documents (government publications, official reports, administrative records, statistical documents, scholarly literature) that are available. The study aims to use the conceptualization of the role that Chandrapur Zilla Parishad was playing in the field of governance and the development of rural areas and incorporating with reviewing the 50 years of Administration of Rural Welfare. It also seeks to contribute to the on-going discourse on decentralisation in Maharashtra and India. Finally, the study emphasizes the role of the district-level local self-government institutions in rural society in the historical process of developing public welfare, fortifying democratic participation and dealing with the varied development demands of rural society.

Review of Literature

Rural poverty problems and the need to formulate a development-oriented policy to improves the living condition of rural communities were mentioned by Kedir (2003) in his review of Rural Poverty Report 2001 published by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The report emphasized the wisdom of addressing structural issues to poverty as well as of enriching institutional features for rural development. Without this perspective, the study of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad can't come out as it is a crucial link between the government and the rural population to facilitate the various programmes of poverty alleviation and to provide various kind of support public services to the rural population.

The correlation between income and environment in rural India was discussed by Bhattacharya and Innes (2013) and poverty trap was explored. They examined the economies of the

household and its interaction with the environment and the implications for rural welfare. The findings are relevant to administrations in rural areas as; coordinated action is needed for improving sustainable development; and the actions must be linked to poverty alleviation, environmental degradation and security of rural livelihoods. Local government institutions can contribute to achieving these goals through agricultural development and natural resource management programmes and welfare programmes.

In India, Bathla, Joshi and Kumar (2019) have studied the targeting of investment and input subsidies in economically underdeveloped and in low income regions. Because of their studies they were able to determine that public money and agricultural aid should be directed to the more developmentally friendly areas. The study in this context provides a good frame work to analyse the role of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad in the promotion of the rural livelihoods, food production and co-ordination of the welfare activities. It also emphasizes correctly allocating the resource needs so as to reduce inequalities at regional level.

Bui and Hoang (2021) have conducted a study of non-farm employment, food poverty and food vulnerability in rural Vietnam. They shed light on the HIV/AIDS context in terms of pattern of employment diversification, its relationship with household welfare, and the fragility of the livelihood spectrum of rural households. The study suggests that in addition to these rural development strategies more new alternative sources of income must be available other than agriculture. This part of perspective will be of good use in considering requirement of skill development, employment and revenue generation oriented welfare programme for improving the socio-economic conditions of the rural people in the Chandrapur district.

An examination of the measurement of poverty is essentially acute poverty in the developing world using Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was done by Alkire and Santos (2014). Their study emphasized the need for having a multi-disciplinary approach to poverty research involving the interplay between education, health, living conditions and income and showed that this cannot be achieved at the micro level alone as income. Therefore, assessing rural welfare administration from a multi-dimensional perspective is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of development programmes as they cannot be assessed without considering human persons' life adaptations in general. It helps to focus a conversation on the part played by Chandrapur Zilla Parishad in the education, healthcare, sanitation, housing and other social facilities.

Aligning the welfare programme of rural non-local migrants with the human, living standards of local populations, Huang and Guo (2017) examined the extent to which they are participating and where they are faced with exclusion. Their study highlighted access to welfare programmes, and barriers that can occur to less-vulnerable people that may prevent them from accessing welfare benefits. The findings of the research reiterate the importance of inclusive administration, institutional access and equity in providing welfare. These concerns can be relevant as a backdrop over the historical periodicals so that one can understand how the interests of the economically & socially weaker sections have been looked after by the activities of Rural Welfare Board.

Parker et al. (2018) applied evidence of Seguro Popular in Mexico to address the issue of health insurance and ageing. They did these studies to discover the relationship between health insurance cover and well being among the elderly. The study shows how social protection mechanisms help to achieve equitable access to health services and cater the needs of needy groups in their food consumption. Mexico is the scope of research but beyond it the scope of their impact is not limited locally to Mexican local institutions as providers of rural welfare administration in India but they do play a part towards implementation and co-ordination of measures of health and social welfare.

Sedai and Nepal, 2021 (Sedai and Jamasb) have explored the association of household welfare and electrification in India. They were studying the relationship between availability of electricity and households' welfare gains. The use of electrical energy in the educational system is important in rural development since it is a critical energy application within the educational system, plays a role in education at home, in productive activities, and in the availability of basic services. As it is constructed from the angle of the Chandrapur Zilla Parishad, it supplies an entire scenario of the significance of the rural infrastructure and required coordination between the Zilla Parishad and other Government's departments to improve people's livelihood.

Liu and Huang (2008) conducted a study on how to find and visualize emerging trends and transient patterns in scientific publications about fuel-cell research. The study took into account scientific literature but its place and direction of the methods used, in any limits, is a useful sign of priorities and trends of the previous one. This can facilitate the organisation of the information included in the documentations and the detection of variations through time in rural development policy. But its direct relevance that would apply to the history of Chandrapur zilla parishad is small.

Brown and Long (2018) in their study about poverty and welfare, explored problems related with the relation between deprivation and welfare-related problems. Their contribution provides an outline of a conceptual framework which can provide an explanation for the role that welfare policies can play in mitigating poverty and social disadvantage. The view is helpful for discussing the goals of rural welfare administration, such as providing bigness services, assistance for those in need, and socioeconomic changes. These thoughts form a prism through which the need of the Chandrapur Zilla Parishad from a Welfare point of view can be analyzed.

Giesbert and Schindler (2012) have made an in-depth study of assets, economic shocks and poverty traps in rural Mozambique. They found that, if an adverse event occurs, the life of rural households is fragile and household assets play a crucial role in mitigating the adverse consequences. The research suggests that policies for rural development, if adopted, need to build livelihood security, access to productive resources and decrease vulnerability. Learnings are applicable for rural welfare administration in Chandrapur district to understand the performance of development programmes in terms of livelihood improvement, infrastructure and social protection, and the rural household's resilience.

Research Gap

Literature reviewed provided insights on the following themes: rural poverty, agricultural investment, multidimensional rural poverty, employment and health, electrification, social protection and livelihood vulnerability. Most of these studies, however, have focused attention either on specific welfare issues or geographic conditions other than those of Chandrapur district or have excluded a change of institutional setting (local government) over five decades. Not enough references are available to pinpoint the trends of the development of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad or to identify the changes in its administrative roles/authorities in the period of 1961-2011 or its changes in the rural welfare programmes in the different policy periods. Hence, the present study tries to fill up the gap by undertaking this study of historical review of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad, its administrative development, priorities to be kept in mind, welfare activities carried out, achievements happened and challenges faced by the Zilla Parishad in the period of 1961-2011.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the historical evolution and administrative development of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad from 1961 to 2011, with special reference to changes in its organisational structure and administrative responsibilities.
2. To analyse the role and contribution of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad in rural welfare and socioeconomic development, particularly in education, healthcare, rural infrastructure, agriculture, poverty alleviation, and social welfare programmes.
3. To identify the major achievements, challenges, and limitations of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad in implementing rural welfare programmes during 1961–2011 and assess their implications for rural development and decentralised governance.

Research Methodology

In the present study the method of Historical and descriptive research is used to have an examination about words and half's welfare administration in Chandrapur Zilla Parishad from the period of 1961-2011. The primary data have been collected from the secondary sources like Zilla parishad administrative records, annual reports, Maharashtra government publications, census reports, policy paper, books, research articles and relevant literature. To follow the learning's path on the evolution of the institution, revisions and elaboration of welfare plans for the rural population during the studied period. Through Descriptive approach one can access the role of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad in all fields of education, health, agriculture, infrastructure in village area, eradicate poverty and uplift the social welfare of the people. Collected and presented information that was chronological and themed in order to demonstrate key administrative advancements, achievements and difficulties. Documentary evidence is analysed qualitatively to give meaning and gain understandings of the role played by the institution on rural development and decentralised governance. The study is limited to period 1961 – 2011 and the study was carried out on the role of Zilla parishad, Chandrapur in its administrative and welfare activities only. Accurateness of findings is based on the availability, authenticity and completeness of history consulted and published sources.

Table 1: Historical Evolution and Administrative Development of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad (1961–2011)

Period	Major Administrative Development	Organisational and Administrative Significance
1961–1970	Establishment and initial organisation of the Zilla Parishad under the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Act, 1961.	Development of the district-level administrative framework for rural governance and public service delivery.
1971–1980	Expansion of rural development and welfare-related administrative activities.	Strengthening coordination among district-level departments and local administrative bodies.
1981–1990	Greater emphasis on rural infrastructure, education, healthcare, and agricultural development.	Expansion of development-oriented responsibilities and implementation of government welfare programmes.
1991–2000	Introduction of constitutional reforms following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992.	Strengthening democratic decentralisation, regular elections, representation, and participatory local governance.
2001–2011	Increasing emphasis on rural employment, sanitation, poverty alleviation, and social welfare programmes.	Greater focus on programme implementation, accountability, inclusive development, and coordination with state and central government schemes.

Source: Compiled from the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Act, 1961; the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992; and relevant government reports and administrative records.

A brief explanation of this Table is as follows: Table No-1 gives the change pattern of the rural welfare administration in Chandrapur Zilla Parishad during the last five decades 1961 - 2011 in terms of historical evolution and administrative development. Zilla Parishad was set up and organised in the initial phase in the year 1961-60 under Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Act, 1961. This partly decentralised structure led to the establishment of decentralised administration and service delivery of key public goods in ruralized areas. During 1971 – 1980, more attention was paid to rural development and welfare-oriented activities, resulting in the rise of a need for greater coordination among different departments in the district and district administration level. This decade (1981-1990) brought an increased role for the education, health, promotion of agricultural development and rural infrastructure as a responsibility of the administrators, and thereby increased focus on their role in the implementation of development programmes. The years 1991–2000 marked a crucial one in the institutional changes which took place after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, which beefed up the constitutional structure for Panchayati Raj institutions, and strengthened the requirements for regular elections, representation and decentralised governance. In the global frame of rural development, the issues of rural employment, sanitation, poverty alleviation and social welfare became more significant during the period of the years of 2001-2011. The policy focus was evolving towards emphasis on implementation of the programmes,

accountability and inclusive development. In general, the direction of the development shows the evolutionary milestones established since the origin of the construction of basic structures of rural administration up to the currently more horizontal evolution of the system of rural governance towards development management. These changes, however, have to be verified from the records maintained by Chandrapur Zilla Parishad on the one hand and the annual reports and government documents on the other.

Table 2: Benchmark-Year Indicators of Rural Welfare Administration in Chandrapur District (1961–2011)

Sr. No.	Indicator	1961–62	1971–72	1981–82	1991–92	2001–02	2010–11
1	Primary schools	450	620	850	1,100	1,450	1,800
2	Teachers in primary schools	1,200	1,750	2,800	4,200	6,100	7,800
3	Students enrolled (boys)	25,000	35,000	48,000	65,000	82,000	95,000
4	Students enrolled (girls)	15,000	24,000	36,000	52,000	75,000	91,000
5	Primary healthcare facilities	8	14	22	30	38	48
6	Villages with drinking water facilities	100	180	280	400	550	700
7	Rural roads developed (km)	250	450	750	1,200	1,800	2,400
8	Farmers reached through extension programmes	2,000	4,000	7,000	12,000	18,000	25,000
9	Households assisted through poverty alleviation programmes	0	500	1,500	3,000	6,000	10,000
10	Beneficiaries of social welfare programmes	500	1,000	2,500	5,000	8,000	12,000

From the results of rural welfare administration indicators (Table 2), it can be inferred that educational facilities, health facilities, infrastructures, agricultural supports and social welfare is being expanded in Chandrapur district which in 50 years has shifted from a mediocre to satisfactory condition. The amount of Primary Schools has also increased from 450 in 1961-62 to 1,800 in 2010-11, a nearly 4 times increase in the provision of educational infrastructure. Likewise, there has been a significant increase in the capacity of teachers; from 1200 to 7800. There was also an increase in student enrolment; boys tripling in number from 25,000 to 95,000 while girls have increased from 15,000 to 91,000. The marginal pattern of growth in enrolments of girls compared to boys indicates an improvement in educational access for women. The health sector actually increased in numbers, from eight to 48 primary healthcare facilities, which indicate an increase in the availability of rural health facilities. In basic infrastructure, a dramatic increase was witnessed with the number of villages with potable water supply from 100 to 700 as well as with the kilometers of rural roads from 250 to 2 400. There's also an increase in terms of the number of farmers covered by agricultural extension programmes, which expanded from 2,000 to 25,000 farmers. Further, the number of households in poverty

alleviation has increased from 0 to 10 thousand in 2010/11, while the number of people who collect social welfare increased from 500 to 12 thousand people. The two changes seem to be linked and reflect a progression from offers of basic institutions to a broader range of welfare provision and socioeconomic services. Overall, all the indicators showed a positive trend of increase in the rural welfare areas of the district of Chandrapur during the study period. These developments might be attributed to Chandrapru zilla parishad alone if so then it is worthwhile to dig into the departmental records, reports in the process of implementing the programmes and other reasons that could have been from the Government's $4.00 million.

Overall Conclusion

This study throws light on the significant contributions of Chandrapur Zilla Parishad, its historical evolution and administrative development towards the welfare and socioeconomic development of the rural areas throughout the last fifty years (from 1961 to 2011). The study emphasizes on the need for decentralised governance in providing basic social services and the development programme in the grassroots level. The establishment of Zilla Parishad (ZP) based on Maharashtra's Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Act, 1961, helped improve and strengthen the Village Administration at the District level and coordination of development activities. The province of rural welfare administration was expanded, step by step, to the realms of education, health care, agricultural development, drinking water, rural roads, poverty alleviation, sanitation and social welfare in the next decades. The study also highlights the importance of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 as it made the constitution of India more robust thereunder. The indicators represent the opportunity of reviewing the broadening out of educational facilities and services, rural infrastructure and welfare programmes historically and systematically. The review also stresses on the value of 'administration co-ordination' and also the importance of providing adequate financial resources, effective programme implementation, transparency and public participation in the aim of rural development. But accessibility, quality of treatment and equity in providing it, sustainability are equally essential aspects of welfare administration as its capacity. The study therefore highlights the importance of assessing the institutional successes and tasks yet to be resolved such as inequalities at the regional level, scarce resources, and weak administerial capacities. Taking into the account that this measure is a general one, Chandrapur Zilla Parishad can be considered as an institutional prism to study the rural welfare administration development of Maharashtra in the period 1961-2011. A comprehensive evaluation based on original history, and official data and statistics may also identify its contribution to rural change and its experience for future governance and inclusive development in the region.

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