**Public Personnel Administration:
A Study in Chakma Autonomous District Council of Mizoram**

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**Introduction**

Public personnel administration is a part and parcel of public administration. It deals with personnel working under the government with various capacities at different levels such as national, state or local governments. It encompasses the management of the affairs of public servants right from the stages of recruitment to retirement from services. Personnel administration helps an organisation in the management of personnel resources with the use of well thought out principles, practices and rationalised techniques in selecting, retaining and developing the work force for the fulfilment of organisational objectives systematically and scientifically. This paper deals with the organisational structure and general working of the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC), the system of recruitment and training of personnel under CADC. It also discusses about other issues of personnel management with a view to understand at which level and stages the system is being encountered by problems and weaknesses in order to make suggestion for possible solution of the problems therein.

The Chakma Regional Council was established on April 2, 1972 under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. It was elevated to Chakma Autonomous District Council on April 29 in the same year. It is situated in the extreme south-western part of Mizoram in Lawngtlai District, the then Chhimtuipui District of Mizoram. It lies between 22 to 23 degree north longitude and 92 to 93 degree east latitude. It is bounded by Lunglei District in the north, Lai Autonomous District Council in the east, Myanmar in the South and Bangladesh in the west. It has an area of about 1500 sq. kilometres with its Headquarters at Kamalanagar, Chawngte (Chakma 2015: 1). Being the smallest in terms of geographical area among the three Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram, the total number of population is approximately 53,057 as per official record of the Council in 2014 (CADC, 2015:3). With the trifurcation of the then Pawi-Lakher Regional Council into Lai, Mara and Chakma Autonomous District Councils in the year 1972 under the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous (Re-organisation) Order of 1972, the Council has been functioning with certain autonomy in its jurisdiction as per the provisions under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India (Doungel, 2010:8).

**Administrative structure of CADC**

 The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India provides Autonomous District Councils to enjoy vast legislative, executive and financial powers within their jurisdiction. The administrative structural organisation of the CADC is broadly categorised into three main organs such as Executive, Legislative and Judiciary. The functioning of these organs signifies the autonomous powers of the Council in exercising control over its jurisdiction. Each organ is allotted with a separate Secretariat building each headed by a separate Secretary of CADC such as Executive Secretary, Legislative Secretary and Court President and Recorder respectively. As a bona fide Constitutional body, the Council is armed with constitutional powers for protection of the ethnic customs, traditions, language and identity of the minorities.

The present District Council of the Chakma Autonomous District consists of 24 members out of which 20 are elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage and the rest four are nominated by the Governor of Mizoram in consultation with the Chief Executive Member of the Council from amongst the persons having requisite qualification and special knowledge or experiences in respect of science, social welfare, co-operative movement and developmental planning. Government of the District Council is run by the Executive Committee with the Chief Executive Member as its head that may be taken as a counterpart of the state Cabinet headed by the Chief Minister. The CADC runs a separate Secretariat with a Secretary as its head and such other officials and staff appointed by the Chairman in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Council. The present strength of the staff in the secretariat is 30 (thirty) in number that consists of one Secretary, one Under Secretary, one Office Superintendent, six UDCs, seven LDCs, two Marshalls, one Technician, one Printer, seven Grade IV staff, two Sweepers and one Chowkidar (CADC, 2015: 5-6).

 As on September 30, 2015 there are 28 (twenty-eight) administrative departments under the CADC which are under the over-all in charge of the Executive Secretary. These departments have as much as 547 employees working under them including 84 (eighty-four) plan and 463 non-plan employees. See table below:

Figure showing number of employees at different categories under CADC

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Plan** | **Non-Plan** |
| **Groups** | **No. of Employees** | **Groups** | **No. of Employees** |
| A | 8  | A | 49 |
| B | 19 | B | 77 |
| C | 56 | C | 270 |
| D | 1 | D | 67 |
| **Total** | **84** | **Total** | **463** |
|  | **Grand Total** | **547** |  |

**System of recruitment under CADC**

 Recruitment is a process or strategy through which prospective and potential employees are selected for various posts in an enterprise. It means attracting the proper and suitable type of candidate for the post to be filled (Sharma at al, 1998: 419). Whether it is direct or indirect, a systematic and scientific recruitment could lead to higher efficiency, more productivity, high morale, prompt delivery of services, etc. and enhances reputation. Though the process of recruitment is crucial and fundamental in the build-up of sound personnel administration, field study of CADC reveals that the system of recruitment is under much criticism. It is said to be too much politicised and merit system could not be followed in the appointment of employees at different levels. Corruption, nepotism and favouritism are also known to have featured recruitment. Political hands decide almost everything. It was back in the year 2007 written exam was conducted for filling up of some Group B posts for the last time under CADC. The result of this written exam was reported to have been manipulated at the level of political executive, thus, spoiling merit system. Though there is a common Recruitment Rules called the Lai, Mara and Chakma District Councils (Group A,B,C,D Posts) Recruitment Rules, 1992 for the three Autonomous District Councils of Mizoram, this Rules has never been followed or fulfilled in the recruitment of personnel under CADC.

**Training of personnel under CADC**

 Training is a well-articulated effort to provide for increased competence in the public services, by imparting professional knowledge, broader vision, and correct patterns of behaviour, habits and aptitudes. It is, or should be, a continuous process in response to a continuously felt need process (Avasthi, 2013:495). Regarding training and imparting of knowledge to the employees, the CADC is lagged behind and still very backward. It does not have any training institution of its own and the employees of the Council seldom participate or attend the various training courses being conducted by the Administrative Training Institute, government of Mizoram. It is learned that during the last decade, not a single employee of CADC attended such training. The so called on the job training and learning by doing is the only system of training and imparting of skills to the personnel working under CADC except those of the elementary school teachers for which training is compulsory to get higher salary. So, the system of training for CADC employees is very poor and need to be looked into and taken care of as soon as possible.

**Promotion and transfer of personnel**

Promotion is another process of recruitment to some particular posts through indirect manner. Promotion, conduct, discipline, pension and other service conditions of personnel under CADC is governed by the Chakma Autonomous District Council (Constitution, Conduct of Business, etc.) Rules, 2002 as amended from time to time. Any other matters on service condition of the employees are deemed to be referred and dealt with in accordance to the Central Civil Service (Conduct) Rules as also in use in Mizoram. There is nothing much different in this regard but promotion is said to have been politicised and used for favouring political party loyal and relative personnel. It is also understood that political leaders are so powerful that change in government would bring with it transfers and new postings of important officials that would allow them to do almost whatever they want as a team. This practice is always associated with vested interest, corruption and inefficiency that could seriously paralyse public administration as a whole.

**Problems**

Sound system of personnel administration is a key to the success of administration and in contrary, mismanagement of the personnel always result inefficiency and weaknesses of administration in an organisation. Though the Chakma Autonomous District Council has been functioning since the year 1972, its personnel administration is not free from weaknesses and inconsistencies. In this regard, the process of recruitment is under much criticism. It was found that about hundred employees were directly recruited recently without observing the Recruitment Rules in force for the Council. No open advertisement was made for the posts and no written examination and personal interviews were conducted. Moreover, it was found out that misuse of official power and corrupt practices were committed in the process. Appointment orders of as much as one hundred new recruitees were issued with retrospective dates indicating that most of them were as if already engaged in the offices from two, three or more moths back. This may involve that monthly salary of these employees was simply muffled away at some stages by some authorities. This move was protested and vehemently opposed by the Chakma youth and in doing so, one valuable life was lost that was followed by unwanted commotion and vandalising of the residents of eighteen ruling members of District Council in the month of July, 2015.

As a consequent of this protest, the Executive Committee of Chakma Autonomous District Council constituted a Rules Drafting Committee to draft Service Rules and Recruitment Rules of different categories of employees under Chakma Autonomous District Council that comprises of a chairman, a member secretary and other three members on August 5, 2015. The terms of references given to this Committee are such as, (i) the Committee shall have access to any files required in connection with drafting of the said Rules; (ii) it will be at liberty to ask any department for furnishing the information or data if required for drafting of the Rules; and (iii) the terms of the Committee will be for a period of 3 (three) months (CADC, No. A.12032/68/2011-2012/GAD: 1).

It is reported that personnel administration under CADC is deeply influenced and controlled by political executives and party politics always features transfers and postings of the employees. Some employees are known to have been transferred to remote places while others are rewarded with good postings mostly based on personal affection with the political executives. Interview of some employees also reveals that there has always been an unconditional delay in payment of their salaries. This is another headache for personnel working under CADC. The council officers and senior public officials confess that they always tender good advice and suggestions to the amateur political leaders who run the government in various matters but would not be fulfilled and taken into account. These problems and other challenges reveal the need of carrying out a study of public personnel administration under the CADC so as to make suggestions for further development and progress.

**Conclusion and suggestions**

 From the above study and discussion, one may come to know that personnel administration in Chakma Autonomous District Council is still in such a backward and primitive stage that it would be quite difficult to run efficient, effective and competent public administration in the area. The following points may be highlighted as suggestions and consideration for development and further action.

1. There should be political will and consensus for change at all levels;
2. Service Rules and Recruitment Rules of different categories of employees should be formed as soon as possible;
3. Training and skill development must be emphasised for public servants working under CADC;
4. Political interference in the management of personnel should be reduced and stopped;
5. There must be strong system of vigilance, control and check and balances to mitigate corrupt practices at various levels of administration;
6. Awareness and moral reformation should be emphasised among the people, civil societies and stakeholders of government services.

Moreover, it seems necessary that a case study should be conducted to investigate to which extent the very spirit and purpose of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India that provides for the creation of the Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram and elsewhere in the country is fulfilled and to know in which points the government failed to do so. It would also be worthwhile to ponder here that how far would the very much talked about ‘direct funding to the Autonomous District Councils from the central government’ bring about positive changes and efficiency in the functioning of the Council or would it merely leads to more waste of financial resources. How far have the Autonomous District Councils been prepared and ready to proceed with the recommendations of the standing enquiry commission for the three Autonomous District Councils or the T. Gupta Commission’s reports that recommends transfer of 23 (twenty-three) state departments functioning within their jurisdictions in the hands of the Autonomous District Councils.

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