



Need to Restructure the District Collector's Role

For Prelims: Indian legal system, 15th report of the Second ARC Report, Panchayati Raj, All India Services.

For Mains: Need to restructure the role and responsibility of the district collectors.

Why in News?

Recently, the **Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy** (Delhi based independent think-tank) in its book "**From Rule by law to the Rule of Law**" suggested reforms regarding role of the [District Collector/ District Magistrate \(DC/DM\)](#).

What is the Jurisdiction of the DM/DC?

- Head of **land and revenue** administration.
- District head of the executive magistracy and overall supervision of **law and order, security and police matters, licensing and Regulatory Authority (such as Arms Act), conduct of elections, disaster management, public service delivery, and Chief Information and Grievance Redressal Officer.**
- **District Magistrate** can deploy and trigger the movement of armed forces in the district in times of **emergency** and **crisis** is done under his guidance.
- He is the authority that issues various kinds of licenses in the district related to **Arms, Explosives, Cinematography Acts etc.**
- In many states, it is the **collector** who is the overall supervisory authority responsible for the proper management of **jails** and **remand/juvenile homes** in the district.
- He is also the authority empowered to issue detention orders/custody warrants under **special security/anti-crime laws.**

What is the Need to Restructure the District Collector's Role?

- The [Indian legal system](#) still has remnants of [colonial authority](#) despite having a modern **Constitution.**
- The name of the positions of the **District Collector** varies from place to place in the country which creates confusion related its role and responsibilities.
 - Post of **District Collector comes** in ambit of [All India Services](#) so the name should be homogeneous in entire India.
- Different nomenclatures represent diverse administrative developments in various regions of **British-administered India.**
- The lack of devolution of powers and responsibilities to [local governing bodies](#) is an indication of the vested interest in mystifying governance.
- [Article 50](#) of the **Constitution** states that "**The State shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive in the public services of the State.**"

Conclusion

- District administration was covered in the **15th report** of the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)**. It is now vital to reevaluate and redefine the district administration's function after the constitutionally mandated establishment of **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI)** and municipal bodies.
 - Although it has been asserted that the introduction of PRIs in several states has restricted the role of district collectors to that of offering guidance and assistance. This arrangement has been pressed by the **15th ARC** report to remove any obstacles in the way of the devolution of decision-making to local levels.
 - All of this requires an entire restructuring of the administrative machinery at the district level.

Source: IE

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