

DIVISIONAL COMMISSIONER

Meaning

For the purpose of administrative convenience, a state is divided into divisions. Each division consists of four to six districts. Thus, a division can be called an administrative area between the districts and the state headquarters.

A divisional commissioner is the head of a division. He acts as a supervisory and directorial officer and occupies an intermediate position in the hierarchy between the district collector and the state secretariat.

A divisional commissioner represents the state government in his division. He is appointed by the state government. He is a senior member of the IAS.

The institution of divisional commissioner was created in 1829 by Lord William Bentick. At present, it exists in all the states except Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan and Gujarat. In these states, the district collector directly deals with the state secretariat without an intermediary.

Functions

A divisional commissioner is the head of the divisional administration. However, the entire administration of the division is not subject to his control and supervision. His jurisdiction extends to revenue administration, law and order administration and development administration. Broadly speaking, his powers and functions are as follows:

1. He is the highest executive authority in the division. He supervises, guides and controls the various offices in the division, especially that of collectors, chief executive officers of zilla parishads, superintendents of police and municipal councils.
2. He is the head of revenue administration in the division. He hears appeals (in revenue matters) against the orders of the district collectors under his charge.
3. He is the chief coordinator at the divisional-level of the various organisations of the government and public.
4. He ensures proper and effective implementation of the various developmental schemes in the division. He removes bottlenecks in their smooth implementation.
5. He settles inter-departmental differences and disputes in the division. Thus, he acts as a trouble shooter and ensures inter-district coordination.

6. He is the head of law and order administration in the division. He is responsible for the maintenance of peace and jail administration. His approval is needed for the grant of certain types of licences for the firearms.
7. He undertakes periodical touring and inspects district, sub-divisional and tehsil offices. He deals with land reforms, survey and settlement, taccavi loans and other dues.
8. He looks into the integrity of the government officials. He ensures that they behave properly and courteously with the public. He tries to redress the public grievances.
9. He deals with all crisis and emergency situations. He supervises relief and rehabilitation operations. He issues necessary orders and provides guidance to the district collectors.
10. He supervises the functioning of panchayati raj bodies and municipal institutions in the division.

REGIONAL OFFICER

Meaning

Many executive departments (directorates) of the state government have their regional offices. The jurisdiction of a regional office extends to a number of districts ranging between three to seven. Thus, a regional office is an intermediate level administrative set-up between the state headquarters (directorates) and its district organisation.

A regional officer (by whatever name he is called) is the head (in-charge) of a regional office. The examples of regional officers are: Deputy Inspector General of Police who heads the range office (a region in case of the police department is called 'range'), Conservator of Forests who heads the range office (also called as circle office), Superintending Engineer of Public Works who heads the circle office, and Regional Transport Officer who heads the regional office. The other examples are: Deputy Director of Agriculture, Joint Director of Animal Husbandry, Regional Joint Director of Education, Superintending Engineer of Irrigation and so on.

A regional officer cannot be compared to a divisional commissioner whose activities are multi-functional. The jurisdiction of a regional officer, on the other hand, is limited to the activities of the concerned department in the region.

Notably, the territorial jurisdiction of regional offices of various executive departments are not co-terminus. This is because, each executive department creates its regional offices to suit its own peculiar requirements. Also, the territorial jurisdiction of a regional office may or may not be co-terminus with the division of a divisional commissioner.

Functions

The functions of a regional office include the following:

1. To supervise and control the work of the district level officers of the department
2. To relieve the head of the department of part of his work. This would enable him to concentrate on more important matters
3. To provide technical guidance to the district level functionaries of the department
4. To coordinate the work of the district level officers so as to facilitate the smooth