

WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR INDIAN PARTNER

Understanding the structure and culture of the sector you are working in is the first step in developing an effective relationship with your

partner. It is useful to have a broad understanding of all the sectors since they intermesh and influence each other.

***Government Departments and Agencies* ♦ ♦ ♦**

Context

The organization of government in India is similar to that of Canada. India has a national government, 26 state governments, six union territories, and local governments composed of municipal corporations and councils. The union territories are directly administered by the president, the state governments by state cabinets headed by a chief minister.

As in Canada, powers are divided between the national and state governments. There is a multi-tiered system of taxation. The national government gives a portion of its tax revenues to the state governments based on an annual state plan consisting of state and centrally-funded programs. The annual state plans form part of a nationwide Five-Year Plan. At the time of writing, the government is implementing the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1990-1995).

The *Panchayati Raj*, a three-tiered system of village self-government, is a

unique form of participatory democracy. At the first tier is the village *Panchayat* where a third of the seats are reserved for women members and presidents. The *Panchayat Samiti*, the union of *Panchayats*, is at the second tier, the block level. At the third tier, the district level, is the *Zilla Parishad*, the district development council. An elected body exists at each tier.

A team of specialists under the block development officer undertakes community development, program planning and implementation at the block level. Each technical department, such as agriculture, animal husbandry and public works, prepares and implements its own action plans. Originally, a *Panchayat* was formed for a population of 1,000, and a block for 100,000. Presently, there are about 220,000 village *Panchayats*, 53,000 *Panchayat Samities* and 351 *Zilla Parishads*. These figures indicate the magnitude of the Indian rural administration.