INTRODUCTION

Of all the social and human institutions in India, in the post Mutiny period, the land system which prevailed in the district of Dharwad had the greatest impact on its social structure and economy. In this regard it must be admitted that the land system had a close bearing upon the economic policies implemented by the British. One of the consequences of such policies was that the land came to be regarded as private property and its produce as a commodity which ultimately led to the division of society.

Unless we recognise land as a social instrument of production it would be difficult to put the landed property to optimum use and to maintain a reasonable place with the growing population. Various aspects of land system of Dharwad, therefore, require a treatment not as accidental but as a matter of historical growth. Every effort is made in preparing the thesis to bring out the historical, administrative, financial and socio-economic aspects of the land system of Dharwad during the 19th and 20th centuries.

We have a good number of published works on Indian
economy of the pre-independence era,* but they are inadequate as far as the critical study of economy of a district like Dharwad is concerned. In the present thesis, an attempt is made to examine critically the land system in Dharwad since 1857 and its impact on society and economy. Such an attempt based on original records mostly unpublished has not been done by any scholar so far. It is hoped that this study would fill the need to some degree, particularly in these days when a study of the economy of a region, as the basis, is gaining momentum.

PURPOSE OF THE THESIS

The main purpose of the thesis is to trace the growth of land system in its historical, administrative, financial and socio-economic perspectives during a period of roughly 125 years (1857 to 1980) in a critical and comprehensive manner. The distinct features of the system introduced by the British, its merits and demerits - and how the system paved the way for tenancy reforms have been examined. The various tenures introduced from time to time had their far reaching influence on society. Hence in this regard the economic incidence of tenurial system of land holdings invites attention.

*However enormous literature has grown around post-independent India including the study of the regions in recent years.
The aspects of which the land revenue is made of are of considerable importance from a practical as well as a theoretical point of view. Thus a study of the details of the subject in order to ascertain the different systems of revenue assessment and classification of land which prevailed in the district provides further inferences for improvement of the land system which has already came into force in the district.

AREA COVERED BY THE THESIS

On the 13th of June 1817, under the Treaty of Poona, the last Peshwa Baji Rao II agreed to cede the territory of Dharwad, then called the Southern Maratha country, to the British East India Company in lieu of the contingent which the Peshwa was bound to keep in accordance with the provisions of the treaty of Bassein. The possession of Dharwad by the British (it being) the strategic point of outlet) was of infinite value to the company under the then existing conditions. The Dharwad district then comprised the present Dharwad and parts of Belgaum (upto 1836 when Belgaum district was formed into a separate collectorate) besides consisting of parts of Bijapur district (then called the Kullelge district) and also parts of Sholapur district.
In this thesis the area covered is the present Bharwad district having an area of 13,749.4 sq.kms and a population of 23,42,213.

PERIOD OF STUDY

The period of study is from 1857 to 1980. The study is commenced from 1857 as it was the turning point in the history of modern India. For the takeover of the strings of administration of India by the Queens Ministry, resulted in a number of socio-economic and political developments which affected the land system as well. The thesis is covered up to the present to emphasise the significance of land reforms and its impact in the post independence era.

SOURCES

The sources from which the thesis has been prepared is of undisputable nature because they are the actual records of the government which contain in-extenso all the original records pertaining to each change introduced by the government. Most of the materials made use of in this thesis are drawn from the original records which are not at all published and
or from actual field studies. But these tapping of the
original records have been corroborated with the available
published works.