

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The institution of the Collector is of about two hundred and twenty five years old in India. The office of the Collector was created by the British mainly for the collection of land revenue. Gradually, the powers of the Collector were increased and he became the district head protecting the interests of the British Raj. After independence, several changes have taken place in the powers and duties of the Collector, still the District Collector occupies a pivotal position in the district administration. Most of the states have a good deal in common so far as the administration of the Collectorate is concerned.

The present study deals mainly with the administration of the Collectorate in Maharashtra with special reference to the land revenue administration in the Nashik District. The focus of the study is on the functioning of the land revenue administration in Maharashtra with Collectorate as the headquarters and Taluka, Circle and Saza as the field agencies.

1. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The District is the basic unit of administration all over India. It is here that the governmental policies are given practical shape, law and order is maintained plans are implemented and data for policy formulation are collected. As the Collector works as a district officer representing the Government at the district level, the study of Collectorate assumes a crucial importance.

The Collectorate is established at the headquarters of the District. District Administration is an area administration. At the District level there are separate organisations for the administration of different subjects such as irrigation, police, agriculture, panchayati-raj etc. The Collectorate handles revenue administration and other general administration at the district level, therefore, the study of the administration of the Collectorate also becomes the study of

district administration.

With particular reference to masses of India, district administration confines to be one of the most crucial levels. It is a level at which the Government becomes much more direct and impinging on the day-to-day life of the people¹.

District has been the meeting point of the administration of various functions reaching down to the village under the supervision and control of the District Collector. District has also been the most effective rallying ground within a state for politicians and political parties at the national, state and local level. The district is also quite close to the grass-root level, and so is meaningful, lively and graphic for the study.

In a predominantly agrarian country like India, the district administration is the actual government in action for the overwhelming majority of the people.

The importance of the District Administration is summed up by Haridwar Rai² as "The district organisation enables the State Government to maintain effective relations with local operations. The district reconciles the criteria for planning, administration and local government and provides solid base for co-ordination and supervision of activities of development, welfare, revenue and police in the field. It is the common area for the field operations of nearly all the departments of the State Government and is about the only field area likely to meet the criteria of size that apply to the several technical services and to accommodate their needs".

There are various expectations from the organisation of the Collectorate. It should be able to facilitate the achievement of at least the following.

- 1) Growth and development of the district and its people by the combined efforts of all departments.
- 2) Co-operation and smooth team work within the organisation where tasks are interdependent.
- 3) Capability of the administration to take timely action if results are proper than anticipated or less than what had been planned or anticipated.

- 4) Quick response on the part of the administration to the requirements and needs of the citizens; genuine response and responsibility towards the community and fulfillment of the role for which the administration exists.
- 5) Full satisfaction for the administrator from being able to fulfill a purpose through achievement and not the frustration that arise from the result of insufficient growth.³

All the departments and organisations functioning in the district are directly or indirectly controlled by the Collector. How these multifarious functions are handled by the Collectorate decides the efficacy of district administration.

Importance of the Study of Land Revenue System:

Out of the various functions of the Collector, land revenue administration is the oldest and the important function. Infact, the office of the Collector was created by the East India Company in 1772, for the collection of land revenue. Earlier he was responsible for collecting land revenue only. Now his ambit is much larger. He supervises collection of nearly all the government dues; which include government loans, co-operative dues, excise revenue, mining cess and royalties, entertainment duty, water rates etc. When these dues cannot be realised as matter of course, they are realised through certificate proceedings.⁴

Before independence, the collection of land revenue was the basic function of the Collector. The land revenue contributed above 50% of the State revenue. Anderson⁵ has mentioned the Importance of land revenue in following words " There is no element in the State machinery so important, so far reaching in its effects on the welfare of the people, as the land revenue system. Starve the state of its just land revenue and the ability of the community to deal with enemies, with diseases, with common needs is also starved.". But after independence due to the growth of new sources of revenue such as excise, sales tax, income tax the contribution of land revenue has become negligible and its share is only 1 to 2% of the total tax revenue

of the state. Thus the land revenue has lost its importance as a source of revenue. The collection of land revenue is a means by which possession and ownership of land are annually reasserted or re-ensured and it is therefore, the basic responsibility of the revenue administration.

The land revenue administration does not confine itself merely to the task of collection of revenue alone. It performs so many functions in respect of land which are of great importance to the Government as well as to the people. According to Dr. Maheshwari, 'It settles and defines the rights of the Government as well as those of the people of the land. It maintains records of all lands, cropping pattern, modes of irrigation etc. Indeed, its concern extends to everything concerned with rural life in India. It is, thus, equally seized of matters relating to crises such as floods, droughts, diseases of plants or cattle. It has judicial function of adjudicating disputes relating to rights of land'⁶.

The land revenue system and the laws regarding land tenure are matters of immediate interest to a great majority of the population of India. In spite of the gradual development of other forms of industry, agriculture continues to hold by far the most important place, and a large population of workers on the land, either own or lease the land that they work. Apart, therefore, from its purely financial aspect the Land Revenue and its administration are of great importance from the social and political point of view⁷. The laws of land revenue deal with the theory governing the rights and interests which may exist in the land⁸.

The land revenue administration plays an importance role in the agricultural development also. As stated by S.P. Gupta and Hooja, 'no project, scheme or agricultural development can take off without an efficient and co-operative Revenue Administration and any delays, errors of omission or commission in the land revenue administration, will have a direct or indirect effect on development. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration at all to say that the

Administration of land revenue provides the foundation for any development structure that may be built on it⁹. Land is intimately connected with the life of the people. It has first priority in their affections. Nothing would seem to be more important than thinking and planning about revenue administration in the twenty first century. This is specially so if we consider the 'inhuman' pressure of our population on the land to eke out a lining.¹⁰

The revenue administration for which the institution of district Collector was established, had acquired greater dimensions and sensitivity. There has been steady functional proliferation in the Collectorate without structural transformation or corresponding increase in its personnel.

It is, therefore, necessary to study the organisation, the field and headquarters officials, their procedure of work, the problems faced by them, orientations of the people towards them, grievances of the people regarding land revenue matters and measures to solve those problems. Moreover, a comprehensive study of the district Collectorate is not available, as can be seen from the review of literature presented in the subsequent section.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The District Administration has been studied by the various scholars from different angles. S.S. Khera's '*District Administration in India*'¹¹ and N.B. Desai's '*Report on the Administrative Survey of Surat District*'¹² provide theoretical knowledge and framework about District Administration. J.D. Shukla's '*State and District Administration in India*'¹³ also provides general information of the district administration. The role of Public Service Commission in the district administration is pointed out in the '*Report on Indian and State Administrative Services and Problems of District Administration*'.¹⁴

F.J. Tysen has considered the overall working of the 4 districts i.e. Nadia, 24-Pargana, Howrah and Hoogly where the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Calcutta extends in his book '*District Administration in Metropolitan Calcutta*'.¹⁵ The book

'*Civil Servants in India*'¹⁶ edited by K.L. Panjabi is a good collection of articles written by the ICS officers based on their own experiences of the administration. Shanti Kothari and Ramshray Roy have highlighted the issue of *Relations between Politicians and Administrators at the District Level*.¹⁷

Most of the studies on district administration were sponsored by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. The Institute has published a Special number issue of *Indian Journal of Public Administration* on '*The Collector in the Nineteen Sixties*'¹⁸. It reviews the changing role of the Collector after independence. The Administrative Reforms Commission appointed by the Government of India has published their *Report on the District Administration* in two volumes.¹⁹ D.F. Miller in his '*Pervasive Politics - Study of the Indian District*'²⁰ has studied two districts in Karnataka highlighting how the decisions are influenced by the political leaders.

Very few studies are however available on the revenue administration. V. Rajlakshmi.²¹ has studied the revenue administration giving more emphasis on economic aspect. '*Deputy Commissioner in Punjab*' by S.K. Sharma²² gives an account of all the functions of District Collector. '*District Administration - A National Perspective*' edited by Dr.S.N. Sadasivan ²³ is a multi-dimensional analysis of the various aspects of Collectorate administration in India.

The administration of the Collectorate in Maharashtra however has scarcely been touched upon by the previous researches. The ICSSR has published two volumes on the *Survey of Research in Public Administration*. In the trend report on District Administration the conclusion is 'Relatively less is studied in terms of the process of District Administration which designs at the grass root in the villages and moves upwards towards the headquarters.'²⁴

In order to fill in the gap, the present study on 'The administration of the Collectorate in Maharashtra with special reference to the land revenue administration in Nashik District' has been conducted.

3. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

To set a definite direction for the enquiry the following objectives were referred.

- i) To study the general pattern of administration of the District Collectorate in Maharashtra in general and of the Nashik District Collectorate in particular.
- ii) To study the land revenue administration with special emphasis on field agencies of the Collectorate.
- iii) To assess the effectiveness of the various land revenue functions.
- iv) To consider the effect of proposal of 'District Government' on the status and powers of District Collector in the light of the recommendations made by P.B. Patil Committee on Panchayati Raj in Maharashtra.
- v) To suggest the measures for improving land revenue administration.

As the subject under study is mostly unexplored, there is little published research material available therefore, it was difficult to formulate some hypothesis. However, as a secondary objective, an attempt has been made to formulate a broad hypothesis viz. "In the present structure of district revenue administration land revenue functions have become secondary functions and matters concerning land revenue are not disposed of effectively".

Operational Definition:

For the purpose of this research the term 'land revenue administration' means the organisation laid down and functions performed by the revenue authorities under The Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, 1966 which affect directly or indirectly the land revenue collection and ownership of land.

4. METHODOLOGY

Selection of Area:

District: The organisation and functioning of the land revenue administration in Maharashtra, by and large, is of the same type in all the districts except in greater Bombay. Nashik District was selected for the intensive study of land

revenue administration. The analysis made about Nashik district, by and large, could be extended and applied to other districts in Maharashtra as well. The characteristic features of Nashik District are -

- 1) **Location** : Nashik district lies between 19 33' and 20 53' North latitude and 73 16' and 75 16' East longitude²⁵. It is rhomboidal in shape with longer diagonal of about 170 kms from South West to North East.
- 2) **Boundaries**: The land of Nashik District is surrounded by various districts in various directions. It could be observed from the map that the Nashik District is surrounded by Jalgaon district in the North-East, Dang and Surat districts of Gujarat on the North-West, Thane district on the West, Ahmednagar on the South and Aurangabad district on the South-East.
- 3) **Geographical Areas**: The total Geographical area of Nashik District is 15530 Square kms. It is the third largest district²⁶ in Maharashtra State.
- 4) **Population**: The population of Nasik District is 3851352 and it ranks fourth in the Maharashtra State.²⁷

Sub-Divisions:

There are 4 sub-divisions in Nashik District as Nashik, Niphad, Kalwan and Malegaon. Two Sub-divisional offices were selected for intensive study of land revenue administration. Theory of elimination was adopted while selecting two sub-divisions. Kalwan Sub-division was formed from 1st January 1992. There was no possibility to get the record / information of the year 1991-92. Therefore, Kalwan Sub-division was eliminated.

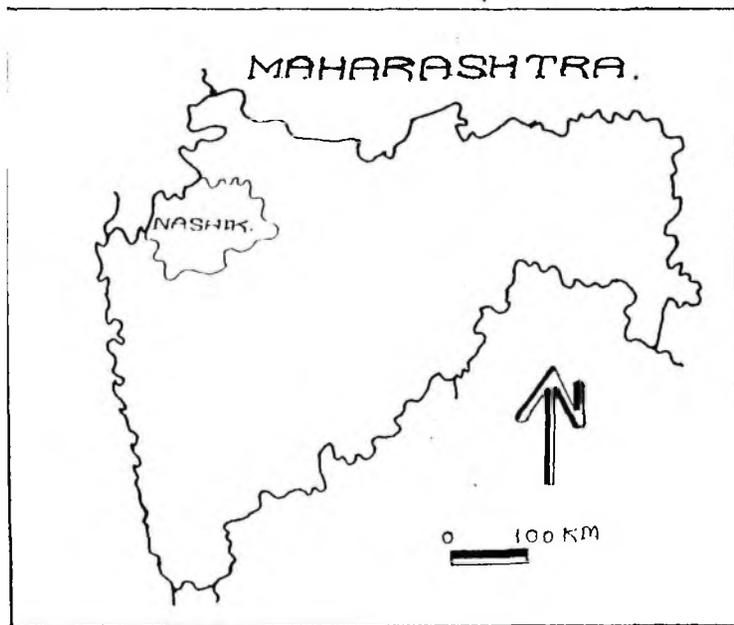
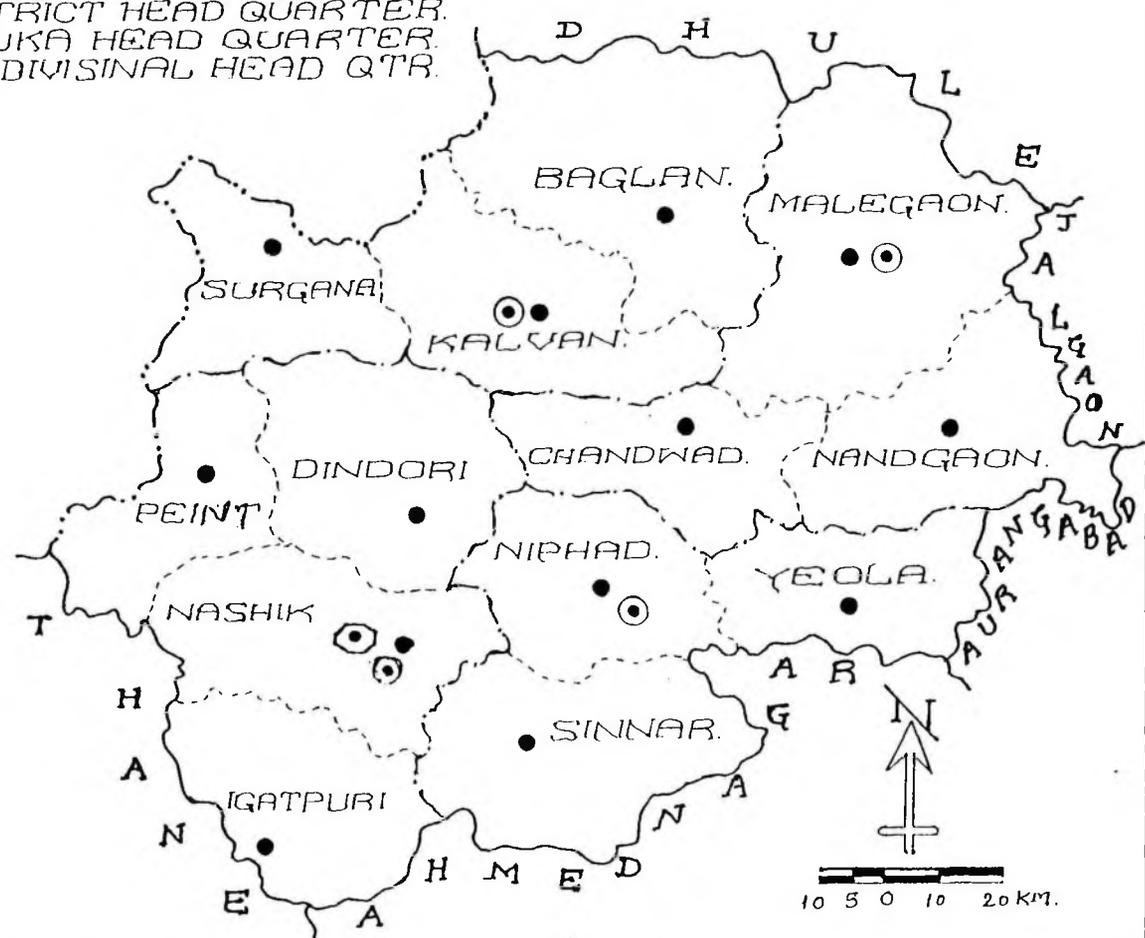
Malegaon Sub-division was to become a separate district after bifurcation of Nashik District with effect from Maharashtra Day i.e. 1st May 1994,²⁸ therefore, Malegaon Sub-division was eliminated and the remaining two Sub-Division viz. Nashik and Niphad were selected.

Talukas:

From each Sub-division two talukas were selected, so as to cover various aspects relating to the land revenue administration.

- INDEX**
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY.
 - - - TALUKA BOUNDARY.
 - - - REVENUE SUB-DIVISION.
 - - - STATE BOUNDARY.
 - ⊙ DISTRICT HEAD QUARTER.
 - TALUKA HEAD QUARTER.
 - SUB-DIVISIONAL HEAD QTR.

NASHIK DISTRICT.
LOCATION MAP.



- 1) **Urban Features:** There are only two talukas in which the percentage of urban population is more than other talukas in the District i.e. Nashik and Malegaon. Nashik Taluka was selected to represent the urban features of land revenue administration.
- 2) **Type of Land:** The irrigated and unirrigated are the two types of land that affect the land revenue assessment. Niphad and Baglan are the two talukas with maximum irrigation facilities. Out of these, Niphad was selected as representative of the irrigated talukas.
- 3) **Adivasi Population:** The population of Scheduled Tribes i.e. Adivasis in Nashik District is 931069²⁹ and forms 24.18% of the district population. There are six talukas in which the population of adivasis is above 50% of the total population of taluka. Out of six talukas viz. Igatpuri, Kalwan, Peint, Surgana and Dindori, Peint was selected to represent Adivasi Taluka.
- 4) **Drought prone talukas :** In Nashik District, Nandgaon, Chandwad, Yeola and Sinnar are the four drought prone talukas out of these Sinnar was selected for the study.

Circles and Villages

From each selected taluka two circles were selected on the basis of highest and lowest land revenue collection. The same criteria were applied for selection of two sazas from each selected circles.

The list of villages and circles selected from the talukas is shown in the table 1.1.

It could be observed from table 1.1 that in addition to the District Collectorate and two sub-divisional offices, 4 tahsildar's offices, 8 Circle offices and 16 Talathi offices were selected for the intensive study. The data collection from Circle Offices and Talathi Offices was pertaining to the matters included in the questionnaire while in other offices in addition to the questionnaire, the data was also collected from the office records, registers files and reports.

Table 1.1: List of the Talukas,Circles & Villages Selected for the Study.

Talukas	Circles	Villages
Niphad	Pimpalgaon	Ozar (Mig)
	Niphad	Pimpalgaon Kundewadi Shivare
Nashik	Nashik	Nashik Bhagur
	Makhamalabad	Gangapur Mhasrul
Sinnar	Sinnar	Somthane Sinnar
	Dubere	Chas Manegaon
Peint	Peint	Shirale Peint
	Harsul	Belpadi Harsul.
Total	4	8
		16

Selection of the Period:

From the view of availability of the record in the offices and convenience in data collection, the period of 3 years i.e. from 1991-92 to 1993-94 was selected.

Sources Used:

Besides the secondary sources such as books, periodicals the following primary sources were used.

I. **Office Records:** For the study of land revenue administration in Nashik District various registers and records from the Collectorate, Sub-divisional offices and Tahsil offices were referred to. It included case registers, weekly abstract of pendency, Non-Agricultural Assessment (N.A.) registers, Tanancy, Encroachment, Watan, Appeal/Revision case register, Standing order files, inspection reports, compliance register, revenue recovery statements, Circle

Officers' and Talathis' daftars.

II. **Government Reports:** Following reports of Central and State Govt. were referred.

Government of India - Administrative Reforms Commission, Report of the Study Team on District Administration, 1967, Report on Indian and State Administrative Services and Problems of District Administration, 1962.

Government of Maharashtra - Report on Reorganisation of District Revenue Offices (Chairman, Pimputkar), Bombay 1959, Report of the Reorganisation Committee (Ch. S.G. Barve) Bombay, 1968., Report on 'Reorganisation of Maharashtra Administration' (Ch.M.N.Heble) 1971, Report of the Study Group regarding Scientific Study on Reorganisation of Revenue Activities. (Ch.Bongirwar) 1987.

III. **Code and Manuals** : The Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, 1966 and rules framed by the Government according to it provide the powers and functions of the revenue authorities in respect of land revenue administration. The Maharashtra Land Revenue Manual Vo. I to V provides the procedural aspect of revenue administration. The Manual of Revenue Accounts by F.G.H. Anderson provides details of precautions to be taken by revenue officers in exercising their powers.

IV. **Periodicals** : The Indian Journal of Public Administration (I.J.P.A.) is the main source to provide critical comments on the District Administration. The special issue of the journal '*The Collector In Nineteen Sixties*', Vol. XI No.3 July - Sept. 1965 is a treasure on the Collectorate administration in India. The special issues on Area administration and Training also formed main source of information. The local dailies 'Deshdoot' and 'Sakai' also provided important information on District Administration.

V. **Discussion:** Formal and informal discussion with the people on their problems concerning the land revenue administration was helpful in highlighting their problems.

VI. **Interview** : The respondents selected on the basis of area were interviewed by administering a structured and unstructured questionnaire. In depth interview of some of the respondents was also conducted.

VII. **Participant-Observation**: With the permission of the Collector two meetings of the Revenue Officers were attended. It was revealed that these meetings also work as a means of control over the subordinate revenue officers i.e. Sub-Divisional Officers, Deputy Collectors, Tahsildars.

Respondents:

To illuminate various aspects of land revenue administration, three types of respondents as officers, field level officials and common people were interviewed. Though three separate questionnaire were used while collecting data from these categories, some of the questions were common for two or more categories. The questionnaire containing some structured questions as well as some open ended questions, after pilot interview, was cyclostyled in Marathi language, however, its english version is given in Appendix I.

The three types of respondents selected for interview were -

Officers	18
Field staff	24
People	32
Total	<u>74</u>

Officers: The 18 respondents from this category included 2 Collectors, 1 Additional Collector, 1 Resident Deputy Collector, 1 Chitnis of Revenue Branch, 2 Sub-Divisional Officers, 4 Tahsildars of the selected talukas, 4 other tahsildars and 3 Special land acquisition officers having experience as a tahsildar or Sub-Divisional Officer in the revenue administration.

In the beginning nobody from the Collectorate was ready to give information about land revenue administration. But, after obtaining permission letter from the Collector for data collection, the office staff extended their full co-operation.

For interview of the officers previous appointment was to be taken. Very few officers answered the questionnaire during the first visit. Some of them asked for a copy of the questionnaire and then fixed specific date and time for interview. The researcher had to visit some officers for 3 to 4 times. The time generally favoured was after 5 P.M. For interview of the Collector and Sub-divisional Officer, prolonged waiting from 5 P.M. to 7 P.M. was done. The interview was postponed on account of visits, meetings, protocol duties, case work etc. In order to obtain true information from the respondents, they were told the intention of research and given guarantee of anonymity. It was observed that the directly recruited officers answered the questionnaire more frankly than the promotees.

Experience of the Officers:

Out of 18 officers, only 8 were having experience of less than 10 years. Six of them were promoters to the post while 12 of them were directly recruited.

Field Staff:

The Circle Officers and Talathis form the field staff of the land revenue administration. From each Taluka two Circles and from each circle two villages were selected for the study. Therefore, the total number of Circle Officers interviewed was 8 and that of Talathis was 16 making total 24.

For interview of the Circle Officer the bazaar day of his headquarter was selected for visit. No specific choice was made while selecting villages. As in some villages, the talathis were not present, the choice was shifted to the adjoining village where talathi was available.

People:

After going through the office records and interview of the Talathi, two Khatedars from each village were interviewed. It was found that the people were giving free responses in the interview though some of the officers gave formal responses. Total 32 respondents from this category were interviewed.

Interpretation of the responses:

All the statistical tables in the subsequent pages relating to the respondents are based on the data collected through interview, and tables relating to other matters are based on the data collected from the records of the concerned office.

In the statistical tables, the responses of the 3 categories of the respondents are shown separately and interpreted separately since they had different interests in the land revenue administration.

Limitations:

The present research work has following limitations -

- 1) The theoretical issues regarding the land revenue such as to what extent it should be charged, whether it should be abolished or not are not dealt with in this study.
- 2) The socio-economic variables such as sex, age, education, caste, occupation and income of the respondents are likely to influence the administration to a smaller extent. However, those variables are not taken into consideration.
- 3) The data collected from the respondents is neither for the behavioural analysis nor for arriving at specific conclusion. It is collected for getting a feel of the situation. The data collected from small number of respondents is only supplementary to the conclusions arrived at after going through the office records.

Chapterisation:

The present study is organised in eight chapters, Chapter I, on introduction, has dealt with the coverage of the study which includes the importance of the study, review of the literature, objectives of the study and the methodology adopted for the purpose of research.

Chapter II traces the Evolution of District Administration with special reference to the land revenue administration. It is revealed that in Ancient

period and Mughal period also the institutions and officers for land revenue collection similar to the modern district and the Collector, were in existence. However, the institution of Collector was created in 1772 during the British period. An account of increase and decrease in powers of Collector has also been taken till the independence with review of developments in the post independence period.

Chapter III describes the organisation of the District Collectorate in Maharashtra with the duties and functions assigned to the Collector. Attention has also been paid to indicate the changing role of District Collector which is need of the time and effect of various Acts enacted by the Government. The organisation and functions of various branches of Nashik District Collectorate have been described with the help of organisation chart to have a feel of the multifarious functions performed by the Collector. A review of revenue functions of District Collector has also been taken in this Chapter.

The land revenue administration is mainly, field administration Chapter IV elucidates the Field Organisations of the Collectorate. The Sub-Division, Taluka, Circle and Saza are the hierarchical subordinate levels of revenue administration. The organisation of these field offices and powers and duties of their officers has been discussed.

To highlight the land revenue functions two chapters have been devoted. Chapter V explains the Land Revenue Functions Part I comprising the two broad functions of collection of land revenue and land management. The collection of land revenue involves a series of functions as settlement, suspension and remission, jamabandi of the land records. The land management function involves disposal of government land, encroachment, non-agricultural permission, extension of village gaothan, land acquisition partition of holdings and boundary marks.

Chapter VI titled as Land Revenue Functions Part II deals with such functions which are of topmost importance to the holders of land to prove

their ownership i.e. maintenance of land records. The quasi-judicial functions, control of higher authorities on the lower authorities and implementation of various Acts has also been dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter VII explores the recurring issues in the land revenue administration. With the help of data collected, attempts have been made to consider various facets of the issues as delay, political interference, transfer and training of the revenue staff. In addition to this the viability of the proposal of District Government as recommended by the P.B. Patil Committee has also been considered.

Chapter VIII presents concluding observations and conclusions. A set of suggestions to improve the land revenue administration in general and Nashik District in particular have also been formulated.

The thesis has become rather large in size as it had to cover various aspects of the complex District Collectorate in details.

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