Preface

One of the illustrious members of Indian Administrative Services so far Shri Abhimanyu Singh once wrote "A Collector holds lasting impression on the minds and imagination of the common man and tales of his sagacity is told in the remotest of villages, even years after his name ceases to be borne in the civil list."

This paragraph epitomizes the prominence of this magnificent office, which is quite unexampled in the history of good governance across the globe. It has been proved by research that nowhere in the world such a powerful office exists having at its disposal vast means and tremendous influence to engender improvement of the most marginalized section of the society.

Today the office of the Collector has undergone sea change. The collection of revenue which was the prime task inherited from the colonial legacy stands no more as the topmost priority of the New Age District Officer, hence the designation is constantly losing the old glory. Law and order is also going out of the Collector’s court. An eye-opening satire in this context stands relevant even today that "For law, go to courts, for order go to police, for and come to IAS officers." Despite of lack of luster, the Collector’s office is probably the most happening and phenomenal structure of Indian democracy. One can think of a country without Prime Minister for one day. But it’s eventually difficult to think of a district without Collector even for an hour.

Increasing political activities surrounding the people centered governance has curbed major power vested in this historical office. The judicial
activism has often jeopardized the longstanding commitment towards protecting the cause of the common man. But amidst all turbulences, this toughest office stands tall as the protector of social justice amidst wrath of vested interest lobbies of power and privileges. The present study is an exploratory research work on the evolution of this historic office and an analytical observation on the comparative stand of the Collector in terms of his power and positions.

The first chapter deals with the importance of the office of the Collector, its evolution and the changing role, objectives of the study, review of literature, hypotheses and methodology.

The second chapter emphatically deals with the concept and changing pattern of district administration in the state of Orissa and its evolution in the district of Cuttack with focus on major functional areas.

The third chapter focuses on the basic issues of inter-departmental coordination pertaining to the line and staff officers. The key factors influencing the changing role of Collector like leadership and motivation are analyzed on the basis of case study method.

The fourth chapter highlights the central theme of the thesis i.e. the changing role of Collector from an agent of the government to a protagonist of social change. This chapter focuses on the special drives for championing the cause of the most impoverished and grassroots sections of economy.

The last chapter includes the analysis of primary data organized through questionnaires, the observation of the researcher, the colonial legacy attached to the office and the hindrances caused thereby along with the need for reforms and scope for further research.