Another landmark in the evolution of District Officer was the period of Mughals. "The Mughals separated the Diwani or (Revenue Administration) from the Faujdari or (General Administration). The Amil Guzar (Krori) of a Sarkar (District) was mainly concerned with the revenue administration to complete his annual collection target to become a Karori (one who realises the taxes to the time of a hundred million rupees for the treasury) for which he could, if necessary, determine the direction of the forces under the Faujdar.\textsuperscript{3} With the decline of Mughal Empire, the office of Karori Faujdar also suffered a decay and finally disappeared.

The present institution of the Collector has been directly derived from the company administration dating back to 1772. In that year the East India Company finally decided to stand forth as Diwan and carry on the entire administration of revenue through the agency of company's servants. The Regulation of 14th May 1772 provided for the appointment of Collector in each district. Those former supervisors, appointed in 1769 to superintend the collection of land revenue, were nominated as Collectors. The new officers were authorised to manage and collect land revenue in their districts. They could also settle revenue cases and civil cases effecting property.

However, these arrangement remained for short duration and under orders from the Court of Directors, the Governor-

\textsuperscript{3} Sadasivan, S.N.: District Administration, IIPA, New Delhi, 1988, p.2
General-in-Council recalled the Collectors from the district in January 1774. This recall of Collectors resulted in dislocating revenue administration. So, the Collectors were brought back in 1781, but with reduced authority. They have enjoyed Judicial authority as well as the authority of making revenue settlements.

The struggle regarding the recognition and acceptance for the role of District Officer between the Cornwallis school and the Munro school could be encoded here. "The Cornwallis school of district administration was based on the principle of 'checks and balances' and division of powers. It was opposed for concentration of too much authority in the hands of the Collector, and believed in anglicizing the indigenous administrative system. While, the Munro school was impressed by the Mughal tradition of concentration of powers in the hands of one man making him the real ruler of the area in his charge." 4

It was only in 1786 that the 'tale of experiment and confusion came to an end when a firm decision was taken by the court of Directors of East India Company regarding the position of the district and the District Officer in the scheme of Indian administration. The Collector, under the

new arrangement, emerged with increased authority combining himself the functions of Revenue Collector, Judge and Magistrate. He assessed, and collected land revenue, tried criminal, civil and revenue cases. Further, he was made responsible for maintaining peace in his area. "It was felt that the new administrative arrangement would strengthen the sovereignty of the country and the powers of the executive".

The next change in the fortune of Collector's office came with the advent of Cornwallis. He did not like the combination of such powers in one office. His Reform of 1793 diverted the Collector of his judicial and magistrial functions. These functions were handed over to the newly created office of the District Judge and Magistrate. So, the Collector remained only a fiscal agent to collect land revenue, while the District Judge and Magistrate became the head of the district. But in 1822 the Collector was again vested with authority for the settlement of land revenue and maintenance of peace.

During the period 1818 to 1858, the Magistrate and Collector in the provinces such as Madras, Bombay and North Western Provinces, following the Munro pattern of district administration was an effective and powerful ruler of the area in his charge and exercised wide discretionary powers.

He was "practically a local governor, exercising wide-ranging superintendence over his district. The Province of Bengal, on the contrary, did not have such a representative of government in its districts who could occupy a position of pre-eminence and primary and watch over and promote the general welfare, from every point of view, of the people committed to his charge".  

Moreover, the "Bengal System of district administration under which the District Officer was a mere revenue Collector underwent a change in 1859. On the recommendations of Halliday, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, of Dalhousie, and of Canning, it was decided immediately after the mutiny to bring Bengal in line with other provinces by having its districts under a District Magistrat and Collector. The effect of the mutiny, though subtle, was decisive on the role of the District Officer. It brought the paternalist system to the height of favour in British estimation. On the recommendation of the Governor-General, the Secretary of State decided in 1859 to revive the office of Magistrate-Collector. The Collector was also given control


over the 'police establishment'. Although, in 1861 the district police administration was put in charge of a separate Superintendent of Police (SP). Thus, the District Officer, once again, being the sole head of the district was practically a local governor. Because of exercising a wide-ranging superintendence over his district he was regarded by the people as their helper and ruler. Not incorrectly did 'The Imperial Gazetteer of India' observe: "A Collector of strong and sympathetic character and with the gift of insight may gain the strongest hold over the affections and imagination of the peasantry, and takes of his sagacity and good deeds will be told in remote villages many years after his name has ceased to be borne on the civil list of his province".  

With the advent of Secretary of State or the governance of India by the name of Crown, it was "a widespread belief that the Company's former actions had often been illegal" and, therefore, "must be regularised". The Indian Council's Act of 1861 was followed by the passing of land revenue, and tenancy laws and by the three codes—the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the Civil Procedure Code. These legislations curtailed the executive


and discretionary authority of the District Officer. The Collector, however, continued to be the chief agent of government in his district, he continued to be responsible for its law and order and well-being. But as time passed, his duties came to be discharged in different manner and by changed methods.

The increasing public activities led to the extension of administration among various new departments, which were of highly specialised nature, shared most of the duties for which the District Officer remained exclusively responsible. Increasing activities necessiated the technical knowledge which could be possible through special training. Various activities of the district which remained under the control of Collector were replaced by that of departmental chiefs. There developed right through the system "a growing rigidity, hardening of ateries, an increasing uniformity, a sense of superiority and a lack of human sympathy, more red-tape, more office work loss of the old direct human rule of one man ...." 10. The District Officer used to pass now more of his time at the headquarters rather than on tour. The close relationship between the government and local officers made it increasingly necessary for the latter "to solicit sanction before taking action and not

to act in anticipation of it" 11.

In this crucial stage, Sir George Campbell, one of the trustworthy of the paternal school, was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. He asserted "to govern actively" 12, by which he meant "to use the power and influence of the executive more actively and decidedly in promoting .... the honest performance by each class of the obligations which undoubtedly attach to it by law or otherwise...." 13. His intention was to strengthen the position of the District Officer in the district, in order to help government in governing more efficiently. Moreover, he was keen to see that "district level officers of specialised departments should not have too many masters and that the District Officer should control the local departments" 14.

He, thus, proposed changes to make the heads of departments the agents and inspectors on the part of government, aid, guide their local officers, each in his own department, without exercising local authority over them. He intended

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13. Ibid.
to make "the Magistrate-Collectors, no longer the drudges of many departments and masters of none but in fact the general controlling authority over all departments in each district .... the real executive chief and administrator of the tract of country committed to him, and supreme power over everyone and everything, except the proceedings of the Court of Justice" 15.

In 1892, a clear description of the position of Collector has been given by Sir William Hunter, as: "The District Officer, whether known as Collector-Magistrate or as Deputy Commissioner, is the responsible head of his jurisdiction. Upon his energy and personal character depends ultimately the efficiency of our Indian government. His own special duties are so numerous and so various as to bewilder the outsider; and the work of his subordinates, European and native, largely depends upon the stimulus of his personal example. His position has been compared to that of the French Prefect, but such a comparison is unjust in many ways to the Indian District Officer. He is not a mere subordinate of a central bureau, who takes his colour from his chief and represents the political parties or the permanent officialism of the capital. The Indian Collector is a strongly individualised worker in every department of

rural well-being, with a large measure of local indepen­
dence and of individual initiative. As the name of
Collector-Magistrate implies, his main functions are
two fold. He is a fiscal officer, charged with the
collection of the revenue from the land and other sources.
He is also a revenue and criminal judge, both of first
instance and in appeal. But his title by no means exhausts
his multifarious duties. He does in smaller local sphere
all that the Home Secretary superintends in England, and
a great deal more; for he is the representative of a paternal
and not a Constitutional Government. Police, jails, educa­
tion, municipalities, roads, sanitation, dispensaries, the
local taxation, and the Imperial revenue of his district are
to him matters of daily concern. He is expected to make
himself acquainted with every phase of the social life of
the country. He should be a lawyer, an accountant, a sur­
veyor, and a ready writer of State papers. He ought also
to possess no mean knowledge of agriculture, political,
economics and engineering" 16.

Hence, clear and confusionless authority of District
Officer was realised to his dealings with the police in
the district. Further, other district level chiefs were
not so clearly put under his direct control. In matter of

technical aspects of their operations they were regularly guided and supervised by their superiors at the provincial headquarters, though even here plenty of vagueness and embezzlement were observed. However, this did not up to a great extent affected his superiority within the area of his authority, it excessively increased his office work and also reduced his capacity to deal directly and personally with the affairs of his district. Near the end of the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon it became increasingly clear that civil servants in districts "were generally tied to their desks and found little time for informal contact with the people of their districts" 17.

The Royal Commission upon Decentralisation(1909) mentioned the functions and powers of the District Collector in the following way:

"Each district is under a Collector who is the local representative of Government in its general dealings with the people and is also the District Magistrate. As a Collector, he is not merely responsible for the collection of most branches of revenue, but is concerned with the manifold relations existing between Government and the agricultural classes, which represent two-thirds of the total population of British India. Thus, he is concerned

17. Lovett, H.V.; op.cit.,p.252.
with questions relating to the registration, alternation relinquishment/partition of and holdings which pay revenue direct to Government and in the greater part of India has to deal in this respects with an immense number of petty peasant proprietors. He is likewise in most provinces concerned with the adjudication of disputes between landlord and tenancies and also with the administration of estates taken under the management of the courts of wards. He has to keep a careful watch over the general circumstances of his district and in times of famine or severe agricultural distress, he is responsible for the administration of relief and other remedial measures. It is his duty to guide and control the working of Municipalities and he is often the actual chairman or presiding officer of one/more of these. He usually, also, presides over the District Board which maintains roads. Schools and dispensaries and deals with vaccination and sanitary improvements in rural areas. Finally, he has to furnish information on all important occurrences in the district and he is called upon the advise on any general schemes affecting it which may be under consideration" 18.

The changes which came forward by the Reforms of 1909 were not supposed to affect district administration, though in the secretariats "men wondered how it would be possible to carry on Government at all. Indeed, all through

the reforms period, the District Officer took things less tragically than his masters" 19. Accordingly, District Officer was greatly overburdened with office work and it could not be expected from him "either to become well-acquainted with the people of his district or exercise over his subordinates that watchful and sympathetic control that is essential to good administration" 20.

One thing observed with Reforms of 1909 was that District Officer was greatly weakened in his position. Despite this, officers of different special departments remained general representatives of the government in their district, and up to an extent influenced the policy matters. The District "is always there in the background to lend his support or, if need be, to mediate between a specialised service and the people" 21. He still acted as 'a direct representative of Government to whom complaints on every conceivable subject can be addressed and through whom the Government can act" 22.

The Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 marked the end of "The Golden Age of Bureaucracy". Despite the gradual

 diminution of his authority and influence, the District Officer continued to be the need of the district. He was virtually the monarch of the district.

**Position of District Officer in a period of Reforms:**

"The ICS had been a great ruling corporation and had not been a civil service in the English sense. The ICS man had been mainly responsible to men in his own service, and ultimately to the Secretary of State for India. He had wielded administrative, executive, judicial and political power. It was the system of government in the ultimate analysis, the government itself. But under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 all this had to go. The ICS were to work in the context of a new power-structure which had come into existence with the implementation of the reforms in the form of legislative council in which the majority of the members are elected. The new power affected district administration in many ways.

The influence of the new Legislative Council accentuated the tendency to make departmental activities independent of district officer, especially in the transferred departments, such as education, excise, agriculture, cooperative credit and industries. Under the old set-up, the advice

of the District Officer was sought on questions of policy, and reliance was placed on the advice to give. Under the new system, although the District Officer was still consulted, the view of the Legislative Council and local politicians came to carry more weight than before, and the decisions on both questions of policy and matters of local importance came to be governed by considerations of political expediency. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report proposed the position of the District Officer in the following way: "The District Officer has a dual capacity; as Collector, he is head of the revenue organisation, and as Magistrate, he exercises general supervision over the inferior courts and in particular police work. In areas where there is no permanent revenue settlement, he can at any time be in touch with, through his revenue subordinates every inch of his territory. Several other specialised services exist, with staff of their own. But in varying degrees, the District Officer influences the policy in all these matters and he is always there, in the background to lend his support or if need be to mediate between specialised civil service and the police".

These reforms did not curtailed the duties of the District Officer as Collector while the District Officer as Magistrate, more or less in all the provinces, had a much more anxious time during the reforms period than before. His important duty was to resist or prevent the non-cooperation movement and serious clashes between Hindus and Muslims which were steadily growing on number of occasions.

A primary change that came in the position of District Officer because of reforms was a change in respect of his relation with local bodies. This change was "by far the greatest" 25. "His function vis-a-vis the local bodies, particularly the district board, became limited to the right to intervene, to prevent action calculated to lead to a breach of the peace or to grave injustice to sections of the population, and to the duty of inspecting the local bodies and reporting his views to the ministry. It was an extension of the principle of dyarchy into the districts" 26.


Large number of district ICS officers did not appreciated the reforms put forward by the Montagu-Chelmsford proposal. "Even a small measure of popular control, considerably diluted though it was, appeared to them to undermine the whole administrative structure built up assiduously by their predecessors". The report of the Government of Bihar and Orissa on the Working of the Reformed Constitution 1923-26, is representative of the views of such a critical and hostile section of the members of the ICS. It asserts, "The position of the District Officer has definitely changed for the worse .... the new system has inevitably diminished his efficiency". The U.P. Legislative Council appointed a Committee to cooperate with the Indian Statutory Commission. The report of the Committee proposed a different view, to some extent, because it was presided over by a non-official and consisted of members of the council. "It is true that there is tendency on the part of government which has to justify its actions before a legislature, not to leave entire discretion in the hands of their local officers. This may have resulted in some curtailment of the exercise of the powers vested in the District Officer, but no concrete cases have been cited

to show that the District Officer has found himself hampered in the discharge of his burden of responsibility under the existing system of government" 29. In general the ICS opposed the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and considered the Act of 1919 "as a fatuous, foolish and premature measure which was doomed to failure. It had to be proved a failure regardless of the fact that in providing it a failure, the flames of a wider and much more ambitious movements were being fanned by these bureaucratic and wrecking Bourbons..." 30.

Moreover, proposed reforms did not curtail the dual authority of the District Officer and he still remained "the principal executive agent of government, the one man who can get things done, whether it be the repression on the outbreak of disorder.... or .... the initiative of a child welfare movement...." 31. He was still 'my bap' among the inhabitants of the district. He still remained whole-sole authority of patronage powers and made responsible for making of appointments. He nominated memberships of all


local bodies. He also granted seats at ceremonial functions like 'durbars' and conferred Indian titles, honours and rewards.

Another landmark in the evolution of office of the District Officer was proposal of Simon Commission. He was not in favour of ministry the position of the District Officer. He asserted that rather than changes or adjustments, the District Officer must be a very important person in the district, "the embodiment of effective authority, and the resource to whom the country-side turns in time of difficulty or crisis". Thus, the Commission highlighted the relations between the District Officer and the district heads of technical departments and the Superintendent of Police in order to ensure the primary of the former as the head of the district and proposed that "except in matters of the pure routine the Collectors must be informed of almost every activity in all these departments".

**Effects of the Provincial Autonomy on the position of District Officer**

The Reforms of 1919 made the District Officer able to adjust himself, even with repugnance and sometimes unhealthy

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33 Ibid, p.286.
atmosphere, to new demands and changed conditions. The changes proposed under provincial autonomy came to be viewed by District Officer " with feelings resigned and vary. On the whole, however, the change proved less startling than night have been expected" 34. He was now supposed to work in his respective sphere or jurisdiction besides the party governing the provincial administration.

The provincial autonomy brought a change in emphasis as to the functions of government. Earlier it was the general opinion that the District Officer " must concentrate on the first essentials - public order, the swift administration of justice, the prompt payment of taxes moderately assessed, the maintenance of accurate and up-to-date land records which would prevent disputes. These had been the four first things" 35. By 1939, with Congress Government, the emphasis had changed, it paid more attention to the programmes of rural upliftment, cooperative banks and village panchayats. Now their first aim was for reconstruction and development of rural areas.

The above emphasis added to his already countless duties " the maddening and infractions business of answering questions, whether put down for formal answer in the

34. Woodruff, Philip; op.cit., p.273.
35. Ibid. p.303.
House or sent informally direct, the host of subjects included under the head Rural Development, and the labour of persuading where he had been used to command. Thus, above mentioned reforms increased his office work and he found himself considerably unable to check land records, and cases took more time in settlement.

"District administration under the dyarchy was called upon to function in a way somewhat different from before. A number of matters were also rendered over more fully to the charge of the local institutions of self-government, such as the district boards. These included, again in a limited way, education, health, the minor roads and works, and a few other things. Also, as an incident of the division of political powers under the system of dyarchy, the separate departmental lines began to be established more and more. One result of this was that the former overall cohesion of the district administrative apparatus began increasingly to be intermeshed with separate departmental lines, leading also in some cases to a sense of departmentalism and working in mutual isolation.

The district administration following the reforms of 1919-20 thus came to be somewhat broken up in the method of

36. Woodruff, Philip; op.cit., p.303.
its functioning. This second period was in many ways administratively the least satisfaction of the patterns of District administration and its functioning, especially in the spell of economic and social development .... In spite of the division of political and administrative powers and responsibilities under dyarchy, the residuary representation, the total presence of government as a whole continued in fact to be contained within the old apparatus of the district administration .... The District Magistrate was also invested with certain powers of supervision, and with some minor sanctions to make his influence felt in the working of these institutions. The Divisional Commissioner also had somewhat larger powers, and in some cases a certain amount of effective overseeing was achieved. But, by and large, the local institutions of self-government tended to form administrative isolates within the district administration as a whole.

This situation led gradually to be Collector of the district becoming increasingly the co-ordinating rather than the unifying agency for the different departmentalised and other components of the district administration 36.

The importance of District Officer was greatly realised with the attainment of independence because partition of country brought new problems like mass movement of people, 37. Khera, S.S.: o.cit., pp.248-249.
rehabilitation of millions of refugees, communal violence, shortage of food etc. At that time most of the work relating to refugees was undertaken by the Union Government, it needed the help of the District Officer to tackle the gigantic problem.

Another major problem that faced by the country after independence was the relationship between the civil servant and the newly created organs of the government. The first reaction of the democratically formed governments and legislatures about the civil servants was of suspicion and even hostility. But soon this attitude was changed because of the loyalty, patriotism and commitment of the civil servants to the Constitution.

Another phenomenon which developed immediately after independence was that of the feeling of departmental loyalties of the officers of technical departments rather than to the District Officer. He was left with no substantial authority to bring these officers under his control. His position with the chiefs of technical departments in the district had become "thoroughly unsatisfactory both from the point of view of efficiency of the government machine and the welfare of the people in the district" 38.

A serious effect of this condition was "the independent and disconnected activities of government in the mufassal which has reached a point of confusion". Whenever the government started a new activity, it created a new department by appointing a highly skilled man as Director along with some regional officers at the government headquarters. They were followed by district officers, gazetted or non-gazetted, at the district level simultaneously or at a later stage, a few field workers were let loose in unmanageable areas without proper training, equipment and facilities. There was no coordination worth the name between the activities of the field staff of any two departments, and they had no sense of common objectives. Consequently the "development activities in the district lacked unity of approach and were always hampered for want of sufficient field staff for carrying out extension work".

In the period of the British rule foremost aim of district administration was to sustain and maintain the imperial power but after becoming independent the first purpose is the maintenance of the people's government. However, the people speak of Parliamentary sovereignty in India, but it is not the Parliament which is sovereign. It is the people

41. The First Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, New Delhi, p.129.
that are ultimate sovereign and the Constitution is their instrument that establishes and gives validity to the different administrative organisations.

The Constitution of India may be considered as the Legal Charter for the identification of district administration in the following three ways. "In the first place it enables the lines of authority to be identified, to discover the continuity of the line and of its relationship to the ultimate sovereignty which vests in the people. Secondly, it demarcates the boundaries and jurisdictions, the distribution of functions, and the limitations placed upon each of the principle agencies such as the Executive, Judiciary, legislature, Central Government, States and so on. It prescribes checks and balances in the performances of the different functions which are laid upon various agencies under the Constitution. Thirdly, the Constitution provides the final point of reference in regard to the fundamental rights of the citizen. The Constitution, thus, is a basic importance in the management of public affairs of the district."

As far as the existence of district administration is concerned, the Constitution of India which describes in detail the powers and duties of various higher authorities

and provides guarantee of territorial limitations and
jurisdiction, has not mentioned about district as a
unit of administration. But, the Article 233 of the
Constitution refers for the appointment of the district
judge but without naming the district, district adminis-
tration, District Magistrate and Collector. The refer-
ences of Code of Criminal Procedure, the Revenue Laws
and other specific statutes have mentioned about the
District Magistrate's role in dealing affairs of the
district.

Great changes have taken place in the social and
economic administration of the district since Indepen-
dence. Consequently, the office of District Officer has
also changed fundamentally in terms of its prestige and
powers since then. Mainly three factors are responsible
for it. "Firstly, the adoption of Parliamentary form
of government has transformed this institution from being
an agent of a paternalistic alien rule into a sensitive
instrument of a popularly elected democracy. The Consti-
tutional position of the executive being held continually
accountable to the legislature, has caused an unmistakable
concentration of power and authority in the hands of the
Minister and his office. So the District Collector is no
longer the final decision-maker in many matters as he used
to be during the days of the alien rule. Secondly, the
environment in which he necessarily functions today has altered in a basic way. The people ruled by him are no longer so subject, servile, uncomplaining and subordinate as they were during the British period. The District Collector is today increasingly called upon to explain, to convince and to persuade the people, not to coerce them. Also the political network in the district is much more active, virile and vigilant, thanks to the existence of various political parties in the district. More importantly, panchayati raj has led to the emergence of a new class of district level politicians who have come to command not inconsiderable patronage and power, even influence over the State Government, thus obscuring and even to an extent eclipsing, the position and place of the District Collector in the state administrative system. Thirdly, the District Collector of today is also less adequately equipped for his job, the complexity of which has, if anything, increased manifold since 1947, than his counterpart in the British era. A member of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is appointed to this post in the forth or fifth year of his joining the service, whereas a member of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) could expect to get charge of a district only much later in his career" 43.

43. Maheshwari, Shriram; Indian Administration, Oriented Longman Limited, Delhi, pp.455-56.
On account of changes, responsibilities of the District Magistrate have considerably increased with the passage of time, but his old power, status and prestige have been reduced because of the emergence of various district heads of different departments.

The change which deeply affected the district administration was introduction of Community Development Programme and National Extension Service of 1952. With the initiation of these programmes, development blocks were constituted and placed under the charge of new officers known as Block Development Officer (B.D.O). In addition, some States created the post of District Development Officer (DDO). These DDOs were taken from the revenue service. It was also expected from them to perform duties of Additional District Magistrate (ADM). It created suspicion in the mind that they could be used only as ADMs because their qualification and nature of service reflected so. This suspicion became fact with the introduction of District Planning Officer (DPO) by some States. In the six decade of 20th century half-hearted attitude of the government did not make development work as part of normal administrative function and district administration remained aloof from it. But, all development works from planning to implementation were placed under the
charge of Development Commissioner. This parallel line approach greatly affected development work. Very soon government realised this mistake and made the District Magistrate coordinator of all activities in his district.

Another change which affected district administration came into existence when the government realised that India's development is possible through democratic decentralisation of power to the local representative institutions. Accordingly, system of direct participation of local people in decision-making and development process was introduced by Balwantrai Mehta Committee Report by proposing three tier system of Panchayati Raj Institution in 1959. The basic idea was to change bureaucratic image of the District Magistrate and made him coordinator, helper and servant of the local people. It was also expected that PRIs would reduce his normal minor duties and would leave him for important jobs of law and order and revenue.

In course of time, law and order and revenue functions of the District Magistrate have declined. In maintaining law and order, police of the district plays an important role and works on the direction of the District Magistrate as well as Inspector General of Police. In
present times because of the expansion of police organisation and responsibility of the Superintendent of Police directly to the Inspector-General of Police rather than the District Magistrate in matter of annual confidential roll have minimised the District Magistrate's control over the police. As far as revenue matters of the District Magistrate are concerned his power is delegated to newly created post of Additional District Magistrate (Finance & Revenue). Revenue administration means collection of land tax and other cess but exemption of land tax up to 301/8 acre land in Uttar Pradesh has made revenue function of Collector just formality, here 78 percent farmers have land below the prescribed limit.

Another change which affected the district administration was separation of some judicial powers like Pure Food and Adultration Act, Criminal Procedure Code, Indian Penal Code etc. from the District Magistrate to Judicial Magistrate. An idea behind this arrangement was to provide better social justice to the people. This arrangement made the District Magistrate head of the district and brought Session Judge directly under control of the State.

Another change which affected district administration was introduction of different development programmes
like National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, Integrated Rural Development programme, Jawahar Rozgar Yojna etc. These programmes were implemented to achieve motto of socialistic pattern of society through eradication of poverty, provide more means of livelihood to the poorest people of the society, etc. It also shifted away district administration from law and order and revenue matters to economic development and welfare of the people. At present Collector has been made Chairman of various development committees of the district. He is a coordinator of development work in his district. People of the district approach him to get help for development work.

In short the duties of the District Officer are many and varied and he is known by different names such as Collector, Magistrate, Deputy Commissioner in accordance with his responsibilities. He administers all affairs of the district with the cooperation of other officials of different ranks and a variety of staff of the district. His basic task is concerned with the maintenance of law and order, prompt and fair collection of land revenue and other taxes. He is also concerned with the direction and fulfilment of the development plans which mark the progress of the country. He acts to maintain the link between citizens and administration, protecting one against the
possible exploitation by the others; with a view to minimise these practices, the District Officer undertakes regular tours in his district visiting even the remote villages, meeting people and understanding as well as solving their urgent problems and above all, seeing that the programmes of the government are being efficiently carried out. They form only a fraction of the sum total of his work. With Independence and the commencement of the Five year plans, his responsibilities as a development officer have taken precedence over his traditional functions. It is his duty to build-up friendly relations with government personnel working in his district in order to maximise the goal achievements, to train junior officers and to keep his office efficient. He virtually acts as the eyes, ears and arms of the State Government.

The next chapters examine in detail his multifarious responsibilities classified under few important heads.