Chapter 4

Logistics and the Construction of Loyalty: The Welfare Mechanism

The British military domination of the subcontinent was mainly possible because Indians joined the colonial army and remained loyal to it. This was partly because the British introduced an innovative bureaucratic structure for constructing the colonial military. One of the principal elements introduced by the British for structuring the army, was the welfare package for the soldiers. This package included a series of incentives with which the imperialists' attempted to purchase the soldiers loyalty. This policy enabled the colonial army to attract and retain Indian manpower and to prevent any large-scale military rebellion after 1857. The incentives offered to the soldiers probably created bonds of loyalty between the troops and the army's high command. An impersonal loyalty structure replaced the personal loyalty of the soldiers to their clan and tribal chiefs, which was present in pre-British armies.¹

The British conquest of India was mainly possible because of the low military effectiveness of the Indian potentates' military forces. In India, the jagirdars (landlords) were responsible for raising military contingents in exchange for the assignment of land revenue by the monarchies. Since the jagirdars enlisted and maintained the troops who were from their own clans, the soldiers were loyal to them. In the Rajput Army, the jagirs were more or less hereditary. When the jagirdars died, then their sons served in the force and

enjoyed the revenue assignments, even if they were incompetent. This hereditary principle implied the absence of professionalism. Due to the absence of a regular bureaucracy, the welfare schemes for the soldiers remained ad hoc, and the jagirdars lined their pockets. The lack of cohesiveness of these forces was because the distribution of rewards in such armies remained chaotic. Pay and pension remained in arrears. Medical facilities and the commissariats were non-existent. Promotions were based on nepotism. To avert defeat, Mahadji Sindia and Ranjit Singh tried to Europeanize their armies by bureaucratizing the distribution of incentives to the soldiers. They tried to eliminate the jagirdars and bring the armies under their direct administration, so that the soldiers would be loyal to the state. But their reforms were too few and too late.

To construct the Indian Army, the British depended on two sources: the professional military forces of Europe, and indigenous military traditions. One of the chief instruments, which enabled the British to craft a new type of army, was the systematic supply of incentives to the soldiers. The British imitated these incentives from the Western standing armies. The professional armies, which emerged in the West from 1700 onwards, had regular wages, graduated-wage scales, uniforms, and a hierarchy of ranks. The state

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took over from the private contractors the responsibilities of feeding, clothing and equipping the military personnel. This introduced the concept of contract between the impersonal armed forces’ establishments and the military labourers, which replaced the feudal concept of hereditary service among the landlords and the retainers. As the troops shifted their loyalty from the intermediary lords to the polities, the armies from quasi-private enterprises became public institutions. A similar transformation in the armed forces occurred in India. However the colonial setting modified some of the incentives which were provided to the troops. Since the British could not utilize Indian soldiers’ national sentiment, it became very important to supply them with monetary and non-monetary incentives, at the right time and right place, and in adequate quantities. So the colonial army created an administrative machinery to provide various types of rewards to the soldiers. The bureaucratic mechanism was geared towards supplying items for the troops’ welfare, is called here the ‘welfare mechanism’. The welfare bureaucracy was flexible, and responded to the soldiers’ grievances. We can infer that by caring for its personnel, the army integrated the troops and prevented desertions, mutinies and treacheries that were endemic in the pre-colonial militias.

The term logistics is used to mean the incentives supplied for the soldiers’ creature comforts. The interdependence of logistics and loyalty is yet to be analyzed thoroughly in the context of either international, or Indian military history. C. Jones shows that the Ancien Regime was able to attract volunteers and boost their morale in combat by providing health care, accommodation etc. J.A. Lynn writes that when the soldiers had no sympathy with the

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cause for which they fought, it was necessary to buy their obedience with pay and food. His observation is all the more applicable to the colonial army, as the sepoys were volunteers with no attachment to the imperial cause. L.M. Crowell briefly describes the administrative structure of the Madras Army's logistics, but fails to link it with the soldiers' loyalty. Tai Yong Tan shows the welfare measures introduced to prevent disturbances among the ex-soldiers, and to strengthen the loyalty of the serving troops in Punjab after World War I.  

This chapter analyzes the welfare package offered by the imperialists to the soldiers. Section I shows the varied types of tangible goods and non-tangible incentives supplied to the soldiers. Section II portrays the relationship between logistics and discipline. The next section points out the linkages between the military-financial interests of the Raj and the welfare bureaucracy. The fourth section charts the varied facets of the bureaucratic machinery oriented towards the soldiers' benefits, and the last section paints the imperial response to popular grievances.

I

Benefits available to the Soldiers

The imperial aim was to raise the combat efficiency of the army by inculcating bravery and loyalty among the rank and file. The British assumption was that valour and faithfulness

could be awakened and sustained by distributing rewards among the troops. So they provided a series of benefits which were absent in the pre British armed forces. The incentive scheme evolved from the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century onwards, and underwent modifications and expansion in the 1857 Mutiny's aftermath. Greater rewards were reaped by the units destined for the battle zones and overseas service as those activities involved greater stress and strain, long separation from families and physical hardships.

Tangible benefits can be classified into monetary and non-monetary incentives. The most important monetary benefits were wages. The Indian Army, from the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century onwards, paid the soldiers regularly in cash, because the British assumed that such continuity and regularity gave the troops a sense of loyalty, in other words that their sense of security tied them to the army. Paying salaries punctually in cash was an important innovation introduced by the British in the subcontinent. Even in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, Nepal, though trying to model her troops on the West, paid them by granting land. Many months of arrears of pay were common in the Khalsa Army, and caused successive mutinies. Extra money was allotted to the colonial soldiers for encouraging overseas service. After 1859, those irregular cavalry units which went to Aden, had their pay increased by one-third.\footnote{Amiya Barat, *The Bengal Native Infantry: Its Organisation and Discipline, 1796-1852* (Calcutta, 1962), pp.139-40; H.L.O. Garrett (ed), C. Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India, 1785-1849*, (1929, reprint, Madras, 1993), p.29. Lieutenant Colonel Eden Vansittart, *Handbooks for the Indian Army: The Gorkhas* (Calcutta, 1906), p. 44; Major D.M. Probyn, commandant of 1\textsuperscript{st} Sikh Cavalry, to Colonel W. Mayhew, Adjutant General, Calcutta, Progs. no. 594, 14 March 1861, M.D.P. March 1861; Major General J. Michael, Commanding at Aden, to the Adjutant General of the Bombay Army, camp Mhow, Progs. no. 143, 6 Sept. 1859, M.D.P. March 1860, N.A.I.}

Were the wages of privates adequate? One School of opinion which, includes Clive Dewey and David Omissi, argues that the soldiers' pay was so high that they were able to...
save a lot from their wages. They sent their savings home, and these remittances reinvigorated the rural economy. R.G. Fox argues that the small peasants sent their younger sons to the army to supplement their families' income. But others point out that the soldiers' pay was inadequate even for the basic amenities of life. The salaries of the privates were actually adequate only for the basic necessities of life. Till 1911, the privates were paid Rs 7 per month. In 1861, the government had to spend to Rs 9 per month for each soldier's ration. The commissariat did not supply the soldiers except in abnormal times. Even if we assume that the privates took a less varied diet than that provided by the commissariat, their salaries, after various deductions for clothing etc., were just enough for subsistence. This is clear if we compute the cost of a soldier's basic necessities from table 8. However the Indian officers' salaries, as evident from tables 9 and 10, were large enough to allow savings.


8 Barat, Bengal Native Infantry, pp. 298, 309-12.

Table 8: Prices of Necessary Commodities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Cost of Essential Goods</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>1 Maund of Salt = Rs 1</td>
<td>1 Maund = 40 Seer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1 Seer 12 Chattak of Ghee = Rs 1</td>
<td>1 Seer = 2 lb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 Seer of Pulse = Rs 1</td>
<td>= 16 Chattaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 Seer of Rice = Rs 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 Seer of Wheat = Rs 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890s</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>15 seer of Rice = Rs 1</td>
<td>A Soldier ate 30 Seer of Wheat or Rice, 3 Seer of Pulse, 30 Chattaks of Ghee and 10 Chattaks of Salt every month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 seer of Wheat = Rs 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900s</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>10 Seer of Rice = Rs 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13 Seer of Wheat = Rs 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Amount Per Month</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1860s</td>
<td>1870s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subadar Major</td>
<td>Rs 125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subadar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 1st Class</td>
<td>Rs 70</td>
<td>Rs 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 2nd Class</td>
<td>Rs 52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 3rd Class</td>
<td>Rs 42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jemadar</td>
<td>Rs 28 Anna 8</td>
<td>Rs 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regimental</td>
<td>Rs 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havildar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naik</td>
<td>Rs 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Rs 7</td>
<td>Rs 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Colonel L.W. Shakespear, History of the 2nd King Edwardes Own Goorkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles), vol. 1 (Aldershot, 1912), p.29; Army committee, vol. 3, p. 651; Colonel G. Balfour, Chief of Military Finance Department, to the Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Calcutta, Progs. no. 330, 17 Aug. 1861, M.D.P. Oct. 1861; Minute on the organization of the army of India, Chap. 2, Pay, para 18, 11 Oct. 1875, Norman minutes, N.A.I.
Table 10: Pay of the Irregular Cavalry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Amount Per Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1860s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risaldar</td>
<td>Rs 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resaidar</td>
<td>Rs 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naib Resaidar</td>
<td>Rs 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jemadar</td>
<td>Rs 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dufadar</td>
<td>Rs 30-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naib Dufadar</td>
<td>Rs 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nishanburdar</td>
<td>Rs 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpeter</td>
<td>Rs 24-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sowar</td>
<td>Rs 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remarks: In real terms the sowars were not paid more than the infantry privates because the former had to contribute for buying their horses. Further, the sowar had to spend Rs 3 Anna 8 per month to maintain a grass cutter who cut grass for the horses. Each horse needed 14 seer of grass daily. Grass was also available in the market at the cost 5 seer for Anna 1.

However, the British officers from 1857 till 1913 were apprehensive that the soldiers' wages were inadequate. They argued that the pay should be increased, because prices and civilian wages were rising. Moreover, they were worried that if the pay were not raised, then the 'martial' groups would prefer the police instead of the army.\textsuperscript{10}

To tide over the price fluctuations of foodgrains, the army paid extra money, known as batta, to the soldiers. In the first half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, batta was paid to the soldiers for service in 'foreign' areas like Punjab and Sind. But when the Company annexed these two regions, batta for the units deployed there was abolished, despite the high price of foodgrains there. This angered the soldiers and was one of the factors in the upheaval in 1857.\textsuperscript{11} Bartle Frere, the Commissioner of Sind, argued that abolition of batta was a mistake as a private could serve in the Ganga valley for Rs 7 per month, but it was impossible for him to serve in Sind even for Rs 10 per month. Sir George Clerk, a civilian official argued against this, saying that batta should not be paid for service in northwest India as foodgrains costs in that region had declined.\textsuperscript{12} However Frere carried the day, probably because the British were nervous after the Great Mutiny, and after 1857 batta was paid for service inside as well as outside India.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{10} Supplementary report, pp.4, 16, 19; Army committee, vol. 1-A, Minority report, p. 158.

\textsuperscript{11} Barat, Bengal Native Infantry, pp.299, 301.

\textsuperscript{12} Supplementary report, p.57; Peel committee, p.45.

\textsuperscript{13} Charles Wood to the Governor General, no.58, 14 Jan. 1860, Military despatches of the Secretary of State, N.A.I.
To prevent the possibility of any mutiny when soldiers who were not needed were discharged, the army sweetened the pill by offering them gratuities: the greater the length of service for the Raj, the bigger the reward offered. When the 13th Punjab Infantry’s personnel were invalided at Meerut in 1861, those with 20 years of service got pensions as well as gratuity which amounted to 9 months’ pay, and those with less than 20 years of service were awarded pensions plus gratuity equivalent to 6 months’ pay.14

There was no retirement age for the soldiers in the pre British Indian armies. Nor was there any provision for old age or disability pensions. In 1760s, the French Army introduced pensions. The British introduced such European techniques in the subcontinent. From 1796 onwards in the Indian Army, there were two types of pension- life and family pensions. For those personnel who were discharged due to physical infirmities, or who had taken voluntary retirement or whose terms of service were over, the army paid money every month till their death, keeping in view their past service. In the 1860s, privates with 20 years of service got pensions of Rs 3.5 per month, while those with 40 years of service got Rs 7 per month.15 For signal service against the mutineers of 1857, Mowla Buksh of


the irregular cavalry, after serving for 36 years and 2 months, got the pension to which he would have been entitled only after 40 years of service.\footnote{16} This scheme of providing extra money was designed to activate loyalty among the troops for combat against possible rebels. Soldiers who showed extraordinary bravery in campaigns also acquired higher pensions. Naib Resaldar H.M. Khan of the Poona Horse retired in 1861 after serving for 43 years. He was eligible for a pension of Rs 20 per month. But due to his excellent performance in the assault on Asirgarh in 1818, he was granted an extraordinary pension of Rs 50 per month.\footnote{17}

In the pre colonial Hindu armies, family pension was available only for the officers. When they died, their relatives were given villages by the king. The British converted this welfare measure into cash and extended it to the privates. The imperial aim was that the scheme of family pensions would attach not only the soldiers, but also their families to the service of colonialism. If the heirs were women or old men, the pensions were paid till their death. If dead soldiers had no surviving parents, then the pensions were paid to their sons.

\footnote{16} Lieutenant H. Collier Commanding Ramgarh Cavalry to the Adjutant General, Calcutta, Colonel H.W. Norman, Deputy Adjutant General, to the Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Calcutta, Balfour, to the Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Calcutta, Captain B.E. Bacon, Assistant Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department to the Adjutant General, Fort William, Progs. nos. 24-26, 37, 28 June 1861, 30 July 1861, 17 Sept. 1861, 1 Oct. 1861, M.D.P. Oct. 1861.

till they became adults, or to their daughters till their marriages. If soldiers died fighting gallantly, then an extraordinary lump sum, instead of a mere family pension, was granted. In 1860 the mother of one brave Resaldar Wachan Singh, received Rs 1000 after his death. Such payments were designed to generate aggressiveness among the soldiers during combat, as the troops were sure that, even if they died fighting, their loved ones would be cared for by the government.

The army hoped to activate the soldiers’ combat ardour through the wound pension, which was introduced in 1852. This sort of pension was given to personnel who lost their limbs while fighting, or became so seriously wounded that they had to be discharged from the army. The magnitude of this pension depended on the nature of wounds. Privates with minor injuries received Rs 4 per month while those with serious wounds received Rs 5 per month.

To enhance group morale among the soldiers, and to make them more amenable to discipline, the Western professional armies provided uniforms to them. Uniforms for soldiers were a novelty in India. The Maratha Army had no uniforms. The Indian army

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19 To the Governor General from C. Wood, London, no.139, 3 April 1860, Military despatches of the Secretary of State.

20 Barat, Bengal Native Infantry, p.145-6; Major H.K. Burne, offg. Deputy Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, to the Deputy Adjutant General, Fort William, Progs. no. 262, 8 March 1860, M.D.P. March 1860.
supplied uniforms annually, free of cost, to soldiers who went abroad. In 1859, each of the 5000 soldiers who went to China got 2 pairs of greatcoats. An allowance was provided to the soldiers, for maintaining their uniforms.

Before combat, the Rajputs used to take opium to reduce their nervousness. The British replaced opium with alcohol, because contemporary British medical opinion believed that alcohol cured many diseases. So during epidemics, liquor flowed freely. John Keegan writes that drink was an important palliative of nervous tension while waiting for action. Just before battle, it was a psychological necessity. Taking alcohol before battles was common in the European armies, and this trend the British introduced in India. When the Indian soldiers faced extra strain, as during campaigns or overseas deployments, they were provided with extra amounts of rum and malt liquor to keep their morale intact. Each soldier generally was supplied with 1 dram of rum per day; but during war and epidemics, the army provided each soldier with 2 drams per day. Sick soldiers were allowed to buy rum at a subsidized price from the army canteens. Alcohol was also the best antidote to the boredom inherent in the long garrison duties.

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21 Tallett, *War and Society*, p. 120; S.N. Sen, *The Military System of the Marathas* (Calcutta, 1928, reprint, 1979), p.72; To the Governor General from C. Wood, London, no. 58, 14 Feb. 1860, Military despatches of the Secretary of State; From the Secretary of State for India to the Military Department, Fort William, Progs. no. 215, 11 March 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.


The army was apprehensive about the soldiers’ health, because much of the war machine’s strength depended on it. The British in India were obviously influenced by the European military establishments’ assumption that supplying medical care for the sick raised morale, and encouraged men to fight. In 1870, hospital facilities were available for 5% of the colonial soldiers.\(^{24}\) The Indian Army provided extra health care for treating battlefield wounds during campaigns. Each infantry regiment had 1 doctor during peacetime, but when it was on active service, it was awarded 1 surgeon, 1 assistant surgeon, 1 assistant apothecary and 1 dresser.\(^ {25}\)

Some aspects of the Indian Army’s reward structure were unique by European standards because the British absorbed some indigenous elements. Land-grants to the soldiers, which the British retained for the Indian Army, had no place in the professional European armies. This incentive was a continuation of the pre colonial military tradition of issuing hereditary land grants (jagirs) to the soldiers. Most of the soldiers came from small peasant families, and had a stake in the land.\(^ {26}\) The army encouraged them by dangling the

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\(^ {24}\) Tallett, *War and Society*, p. 111; Minute on the organization of the native army of India, Ch. 2, Bengal Army, para 36, 43, 11 Oct. 1875, Norman minutes, N.A.I.

\(^ {25}\) Lieutenant Colonel W.J. Wilson, *Historical Records of the Fourth Prince of Wales Own Regiment Madras Light Cavalry* (Madras 1877), p.45; Colonel L.W. Shakespear, *History of the 2nd King Edward’s Own Goorkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles)*, vol. 1, (Aldershot, 1912), p.3; Colonel H. Marshall, Acting Secy. to the Govt. of Madras, Military Department, to the offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Fort Saint George, Progs. no. 41, 3 Feb. 1860, M.D.P. March 1860.

\(^ {26}\) Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, *The Art of War in Medieval India* (New Delhi, 1984), pp.75-86; Omissi, *Sepoy*
prospect of jagirs in front of them. For exceptional performances, like raising soldiers for the Raj, saving the lives of British officers, suffering wounds in battles etc., the army awarded such personnel land. Aitah Mohammed Khan was a Resaldar in the Bunoo Police Cavalry. During 1857, he volunteered for service in Hindustan along with 112 of his tribesmen. They were in the Multan Horse and fought against the rebels in Delhi. After the rebellion, he and his followers were granted jagirs (each worth Rs 1000), in perpetuity.27

When it was not possible to provide cooked food to soldiers during emergencies, the army provided, at controlled prices in the bazaars set up under military supervision, raw food grains which the men had to cook. Bazars were an indigenous tradition which the British absorbed. When local supplies were not forthcoming, such markets were set up and they had at least 3 days supplies. The commanding officers maintained registers which contained the names of all the baniahs (Hindu businessmen) who were allowed to join the market. The baniahs had to pay a certain sum to the regiments for being allowed to do business. One baniah supplied either a company or half a squadron of cavalry. The baniahs occasionally supplied on credit. No mahajans (moneylenders) were allowed in the bazaars, because the army feared that the soldiers might get into debt. Indian officers were appointed as kotwals, who saw that baniahs supplied proper quantities of cereals to the soldiers.28

and the Raj, p.50; Minute on the organization of the army, Ch. 2, Bengal Army, para 66, 11 Oct.1875, Norman minutes.

27 Captain J.B. Lind Commanding Pathan Cavalry, to Major R.C. Lawrence, Military Secy. to the Punjab Govt., Lahore, Progs. no.180, 13 July 1861, M.D.P. Oct. 1861.

28 Sarkar, Art of War, p.191; Army Regulations, p.82; Peel committee, p.4.
The history of warfare shows, however, that soldiers were not willing to die just for tangible incentives. The missing link was symbolic rewards. Such tokens conferred honour and glory: the intangible factors that led men to war. The pre colonial armies had at their disposal robes of honour, daggers etc. which were awarded to exceptional warriors. But the British replaced these with rewards like medals imported from the West. Charles I in 1643 first introduced the silver medal for those men who had performed well under difficult circumstances. Individual loyalty and gallantry were honoured by supplying Distinguished Service Medals to the Indian soldiers after extraordinary performances.\(^{29}\) For honouring regimental pride, the 2\(^{nd}\) Gurkha Rifles, which participated in the successful Kabul-Kandahar march, was awarded bronze stars in February 1882.\(^{30}\) Though such medals were of little intrinsic value, they had value within the armed forces: John Keegan rightly says that the cultural ethos of the military organizations was different from the civilian world.\(^{31}\)

Orders and ranks were two awards which had some markers of status, along with the financial incentives associated with them. In 1837, Bentinck introduced the Order of Merit. The Indian Order of Merit was given for showing extraordinary bravery in combat. Those who bagged this award had their salaries and pensions increased, and were allowed

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\(^{30}\) Shakespear, *Sirmoor Rifles*, p. 104.

\(^{31}\) Keegan, *History of Warfare*, p. XVI.
Ranks were a sort of carrot which, the British believed, encouraged the soldiers to risk their lives repeatedly. This was because higher ranks meant greater prestige, along with financial perquisites. So, for gallantry in combat, the troops were promoted. In 1860, a private named Ranjit Singh, was promoted to a Naik after being wounded in action.

II

Welfare Measures as a Disciplinary Mechanism.

Incentives were tools of domination as they were supplied to the soldiers with the aim of encouraging proper behaviour. When the soldiers misbehaved, welfare measures were denied to them. The commanding officers had the discretionary power to give non-military jobs to soldiers, either during their service tenure, or after their retirement. For such jobs, soldiers required recommendations and good character certificates from their officers. This became a technique for extracting obedience from soldiers as such jobs involved less strenuous duties and the troops continued to draw military salaries or pensions along with the wages of the extra-military jobs. One Havildar of the 48th Madras Infantry, Munniapah, being in the good books of his commanding officer, became a Sub-Overseer in the P.W.D.

32 Barat, Bengal Native Infantry, p. 146; Wilson, Madras Cavalry, p.66; Army Regulations, pp.69-70; To the Governor General from C. Wood, London, no. 50, 24 Jan. 1860, Military despatches of the Secretary of State.

33 To the Governor General from C. Wood, London, no. 77, 24 Feb. 1860, Military despatches of the Secretary of State.
in Moulmein in 1861. If the soldiers on deputation misbehaved, they were removed from the civil departments.\textsuperscript{34}

Good Conduct Pay was another scheme introduced in 1837 for disciplining the soldiers. Those who served obediently received extra pay. The army’s plan was to encourage long-term loyalty. The longer the soldiers remained loyal, the greater was their Good Conduct Pay. After 6 years of service it became Rs 1 per month and for 10 years of service, it increased to Rs 2 per month. However, the commanding officers could deny this extra pay on grounds of misconduct. There was disagreement in the army over this scheme: some officers wanted to link discipline with combat effectiveness. They argued that the higher pay should depend, not merely on the proper conduct and length of service, but also on the tactical efficiency of the troops.\textsuperscript{35}

The breakdown of discipline in 1857 forced the army to strengthen the link between obedient behaviour and wages. The Punjab School argued that ambition and satisfaction could be induced among the soldiers by a graduated scale of pay for each rank. The authorities hoped that this would satisfy the loyal veterans, and would discourage rebelliousness among the junior troops, as they were bound to gain economically by

\textsuperscript{34} Army Regulations, pp.89, 267; Extract from the proceedings of the Governor General of India in the Military Department, Progs. nos. 412, 614, 18 March 1861, M.D.P March 1861; Memo by Colonel E. Haythorne, Adjutant General, Adjutant General’s office, Ambala, circular no. 63/N, 27 March 1865, Adjutant General’s circulars, vol. 5.

\textsuperscript{35} Omissi, Sepoy and the Raj, p.67; Army committee, vol.1-A, Minority report, p.159; Circular to officers commanding divisions, districts and native infantry regiments, by Haythorne, Adjutant General’s office, Simla, circular no. 97/N, 17 Aug. 1864, Adjutant General’s circulars, vol. 4, Minute on the organization of the army, Ch. 2, Bengal Army, para 26, 30, 11 Oct. 1875, Norman minutes.
remaining loyal in the long run. This scheme was geared to encourage loyalty among the younger soldiers, as the life pension scheme had attractions only for the old soldiers who were going to retire (and most of the rebels of 1857 had been newly enlisted recruits). Under this scheme the privates got Rs 6 per month for the 1st year of service, Rs 7 per month from the 2nd year of their service, and Rs 8 per month after 15 years of service. Finally, after 20 years of service, they received Rs 8.8 per month. Graduated scales of pay existed for the Indian officers also, but they were based not only on seniority, but also on merit as assessed by the British officers.\textsuperscript{36} The power of assessing the capabilities of the Indian officers, enabled the British officers to control them.

A group within the army wanted to increase the life pension of the Indian officers and the privates. This group argued that the Indian officers, with their high social position and the influence they enjoyed in their local communities, should not be alienated. Colonel L.C. Dunsterville, Commandant of the 20th Punjab Regiment in 1912, warned that the low rate of the privates’ pension was a source of discontent among the Sikhs. Major General F.J. Aylmer argued that the army introduced the life pension with the aim of extracting long-term good behaviour from the soldiers. The underlying assumption was that the troops, in the hope of getting a pension after retirement, remained obedient (as ‘misbehaviour’ would result in discharges). But as the pension had remained the same for the last hundred years, it should be raised. W. Meyer, a civilian official, challenged this line of thinking. Meyer argued that it was improper to pamper the soldiers, who were mercenaries. Moreover, he continued, in the civil departments, one received a pension after 30 years of service while

\textsuperscript{36} Supplementary report, pp.18, 36, 55; Minute on the organization of the army, Ch. 5, Pension system, para 2, 11 Oct. 1875, Norman minutes.
conditions in the army were improving. Before 1857, soldiers received a pension after 40 years of service. In 1878, they received pension after 32 years of service. And now they were receiving it after 25 years of service. Aylmer argued against this that the soldiers' job was more arduous than that of the civilians were and there was no other option than to keep the mercenaries contented.\textsuperscript{37} However, in the end, due to the army's penny-pinching policy, the pension was not raised despite the threat to discipline.

Frequently in history, the breakdown of supplies has resulted in the disintegration of military forces. Lack of food resulted in a decline of morale, which resulted in desertions, and the weakening of discipline, which culminated in pillage and plunder, thus resulting in peasant violence against the troops. The best example of this was the dissolution of the French Army in Spain against counter-insurgency warfare during 1808. The Maratha Army did not accept the burden of feeding the soldiers directly during wartime. Contractors were assigned pieces of land temporarily. From its revenues they were supposed to supply the army. However this system was clumsy. The Marathas also depended on the banjaras (grain merchants) who not only charged exorbitant prices, but also vanished during campaigns and occasionally sold grain to the enemy forces. As a result the Maratha field armies disintegrated during protracted campaigns. In India the princely armies commandeered supplies, which in turn alienated the peasants. By contrast, Arthur Wellington paid for all his supplies during his campaign against Mysore and the Marathas. This made the peasants pro-British and they brought all the provisions to the Company's force. Moreover the peasants supplied the British with information about the enemy's movements. A contented peasantry made the British rear secure, and an effective supply

system possible. The Company's sepoys fought badly against the Sikhs at Ferozeshah on December 1845 because they were without provisions. But when well-fed before the fight at Aliwal on January 1846, they performed admirably. The British learnt the lesson from this. To prevent losses among the men and animals in the army due to malnutrition, and to raise the fighting spirit of the troops, the military establishment was concerned to ensure the supply of food for the soldiers, and forage for their horses. During famines, or when the army functioned as an Imperial Fire Brigade, local supplies either became too costly or were just not available. The commissariat then came to the soldiers' assistance. Rations were supplied when the troops were deployed in China, as the provisions could not be procured there.\textsuperscript{38} If local food supplies were available but were costly, then the army paid its personnel extra. Each soldier, according to the army's calculations, spent Rs 3 Anna 8 per month on his diet. But in 1860, when the prices of foodgrains increased, the authorities calculated that each soldier had to spend more than the stipulated amount. The army provided the extra money, as dearness allowance for the diet.\textsuperscript{39} This kept the British-Indian soldiers well-disciplined and tactically effective. During emergencies, when local food


\textsuperscript{39} Norman, to Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department Calcutta, Progs. no. 36, 6 July 1861, M.D.P. Oct. 1861.
supplies collapsed, the more disciplined Indian regiments got preferential treatment from the commissariat, in order to encourage obedience among the other units. In 1861, when due to famine in Rajasthan, the units stationed there failed to acquire local supplies at normal rates, the commissariat issued a special allowance first to the Mharwara Battalion as it had remained loyal during 1857.40

In general, the soldiers were provided some money known as a hutting allowance, for constructing their lines when they were shifted from one place to another. But gradually the army constructed barracks (lines) for the soldiers.41 Their Home Army in Britain, which started building barracks from the 17th century, probably influenced the British in India. The argument was that billeting the soldiers in the civilians’ houses harmed group cohesion as the regiments had to be broken into small groups. This also made it difficult for the authorities to monitor the soldiers. The European armies believed that an essential military conditioning factor was the barrack, which separated the soldiers from the civilian world. The colonial army provided housing facilities to the soldiers because the military elites believed that, if they were lodged with the civilians, then the troops’ discipline would collapse. The army felt that if the troops were exposed to the ‘seditious’ influence of the civilians’ then their loyalty would undergo a severe strain. So the soldiers’ lines were

40 Colonel G.S.T. Lawrence, Agent for the Rajputana States, to the Undersecretary, to the India Govt., Foreign Department, Progs. no. 315, 29 Jan. 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.

41 Hannyngton, to the offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Becher, to the Secy. of the Govt. of India, Military Department, Calcutta, Major F.D. Atkinson, to the offg. Controller of Military Finance, Fort William, Progs. nos. 390, 720, 722, 25 Jan. 1861, 21 March 1861, 28 March 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.
constructed and repaired at the state's expense.\textsuperscript{42} Again, to set an example, loyal and disciplined units were always allowed the first claim on hutting money.\textsuperscript{43}

From its retired personnel, the army created a landed gentry to police the countryside. In the British conceptual framework, the landed gentry was respected in India. It was the imperial belief that land grants increased the prestige of the ex-soldiers, and indirectly that of the army, in the rural society. The army provided land either to the individual soldiers, or created military colonies. Such measures also benefited the soldiers' families and encouraged them either to remain loyal or serve in the army. Subadar Major Sangbir Thapa of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Gurkhas got a piece of land in 1868 for his loyal service throughout his long tenure.\textsuperscript{44} For old soldiers, the army set up colonies separated from the society. The military colonies were the continuation of the Invalid Thanahs, which the Bengal Army established in the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century. It was easier for the army to keep watch over the retired soldiers concentrated in the colonies than if they were scattered throughout the countryside. Their sons grew up in such colonies and were potential reservoirs of recruits. The government took 3000 acres of land from the zamindars in Dehradun for a military colony to settle the Gurkhas who had aided the British in reconquering Delhi from

\textsuperscript{42} Tallett, \textit{War and Society}, pp. 141-2; John Childs, 'The Restoration Army, 1660-1702', in Chandler et. al., \textit{History of the British Army}, p. 62; \textit{Army Regulations}, p.81; Memorandum by Norman on the distribution of the native armies of India, para 10, 26 Sept. 1872, Minute on the organization of the army, Ch. 2, Bengal Army, Localization of regiments, para 11, 11 Oct. 1875, Norman minutes.

\textsuperscript{43} Hannyngton, to the offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Progs. no. 392, 25 Jan. 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.

\textsuperscript{44} Shakespear, \textit{Simzoor Rifles}, p.99.
the rebels in 1857. The retired Gurkhas cultivated the land and paid the lowest possible tax.\textsuperscript{45} For the imperialists', soldiers were more vital than the Raj's local collaborators-the zamindars. While constructing the colonies, the army deliberately encouraged zamindar-soldier rivalry to prevent any bonhomie between the 'natural leaders' of the Indian society and the Raj's sword arm. The army wanted the retired soldiers to check the zamindars' power.

For retaining the orders and the medals, the soldiers had to behave well, as they were liable to lose these privileges for misconduct, or if they had to appear before the courts martial.\textsuperscript{46} Besides gallantry, good behaviour on part of the soldiers was also necessary for promotions. One Mohammed Afzul, a trooper of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Punjab Cavalry, on 23 October 1857 attacked the rebels in Kanauj. But due to his previous record of bad conduct, he was not promoted to a non-commissioned officer. However, Ranjit Singh, a private who was wounded in action was promoted to a Naik, as his previous service record was satisfactory.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{45} Seema Alavi, \textit{The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India, 1770-1830} (New Delhi, 1995), pp.95-139; Extract from the proceedings of the Governor General in the Home Department, camp Kylwara, Atkinson, to the Adjutant General, Fort William, Progs. nos. 618-19, 4 Jan. 1861, 15 March 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Army Regulations}, pp.68-70.

\textsuperscript{47} Anon, \textit{History of the 1st Punjab Cavalry} (Lahore, 1887), p.40; To the officers commanding divisions, districts and brigades, circular by Johnson, Adjutant General’s office, Lucknow, circular no. 568, 27 Jan. 1863, Adjutant General’s circulars, vol. 3; To the Governor General from C. Wood, London, no.77, 24 Feb. 1860, Military despatches of the Secretary of State.
The British strategy was to co-opt Indian officers by offering them greater quantities of tangible and non-tangible rewards, so as to separate them from the privates, in order to cause divisions of interest among the Indian soldiers. The imperial hope was that the privileged group— the officers— would crave extra rewards for themselves. So self-interest would dominate over the collective interest. Hence a struggle for power, prestige and privilege would emerge among the Indian soldiers and they could not operate as a monolith against the British officer corps.

Indian officers got more facilities than the privates. In return, they were responsible for the behaviour of their troops. The excuse that they had no knowledge about the privates was no more accepted after 1857. Resaldar Majors and Subedar Majors became the confidential advisors of the British commandants about the state of the Indian privates, and aided the British officers in disciplining the troops.48

During 1857, the Bengal Army rebelled and the Punjab Irregular Cavalry aided in its suppression. So the British increased the latters’ pay after 1859. The British assumption was that the influence of the Indian officers over the privates was directly proportional to the formers’ seniority. So the higher the rank, the greater was the quantum of increase in the pay packet. While Resaldars’ salaries were doubled, the Dufadar and Kote Dufadars’ salaries increased by Rs 10 and Rs 7 respectively, and the sowars’ pay was raised only by Rs 5.49 In the barracks there were special quarters for the Indian officers, for extra comfort

48 Army Regulations, p.104; Supplementary report, p.37.

49 Supplementary report, pp.16-18.
and privacy for them.\textsuperscript{50} The higher the rank, the greater was the hutting allowance. In the 1860s, a Subadar got Rs 30, a Jemadar Rs 15, a Havildar Rs 10 and a private only Rs 3.\textsuperscript{51} The Orders of British India were granted only to the Indian officers for long, honourable and faithful service. Those who got these awards received the honorary titles of ‘Sirdar Bahadur’ and ‘Bahadur’ and after retirement got the honorary rank of Lieutenant or Captain. In addition to their salaries or pensions they got Rs 30-60 per month. Every year, about 100 officers were given such awards.\textsuperscript{52} Though the Indian Order of Merit was given to both the Indian officers and the privates, the lion’s share went to the commissioned ranks. In the history of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Punjab Cavalry about 23 persons got this order, 16 of whom were officers.\textsuperscript{53} We may take this unit as representative of the Indian cavalry regiments.

III

Welfare Measures, Military Effectiveness and Financial Interests of the Army

Some welfare measures aided the military and financial interests of the army, while other measures harmed the security and monetary dimensions of the colonial war machine. Non-military jobs awarded to soldiers were financially helpful to the state, because this technique

\textsuperscript{50} Note on the garrison and fortress of Agra, Native troops, Calcutta, 31 Dec. 1873, Norman minutes.

\textsuperscript{51} Hannyngton, to the offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Progs. no. 392, 25 Jan. 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.

\textsuperscript{52} Wilson, \textit{Madras Cavalry}, p.66.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{1st Punjab Cavalry}, Appendix II-III, pp. IV-V.
enabled the army head quarter, to honour loyal and brave officers for whom vacancies did not exist in the army. It was also cheaper for the government to man the P.W.D. with Indian officers. In addition, the Indian officers were more efficient as, unlike the European Sergeants, they did not get drunk.\textsuperscript{54}

The gratuity scheme raised the army's budget as it had to pay a huge sum to the soldiers all of a sudden. But at the same time, this measure raised the army's combat potential. Gratuities enabled the army to get rid of aged personnel, who were militarily less effective compared with the young robust personnel capable of arduous campaigning. There were many units which possessed soldiers with more than 2 decades of service. One such unit was the Nagpur Irregular Force. To get rid of 143 aged men, the army had to spend Rs 22,195. Those privates with 26 years of service were given Rs 160 each.\textsuperscript{55} Those soldiers who were unfit for soldiering but had not yet reached the age (20 years of service) necessary for getting pensions were encouraged to take discharge by offering them gratuities. For them, in 1870, the army introduced a policy under which soldiers willing to take discharge after 5 or 10 years of service got gratuities amounting to salaries of 3

\textsuperscript{54} Extract from the proceedings of the President of the Council of India, Fort William, 26 Nov. 1860; From the Adjutant General, to the Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Progs. no. 614, 3 Jan. 1861, M.D.P. March 1861, Circular to officers commanding divisions and districts, service soldiers, memos, by Haythorne, Adjutant General's office, Ambala, circular nos. 62/N, 63/N, 27 March 1865, Adjutant General's circulars, vol. 5.

\textsuperscript{55} Roll of men of the Nagpur Force transferred to the pension establishment, Progs. no. 388, 28 Aug. 1861, M.D.P. Oct. 1861.
months and 6 months respectively. The scheme was geared to create an army of young
men, probably in response to the growing Russian threat on the northwest frontier.

Wound pensions for the irregular cavalry horses involved an obligation on the part of
the army to replace the dead horses. This expenditure was aimed to raise the combat
effectiveness of the irregular troopers. Such troopers were responsible for buying their own
horses. When they lost their horses in action, all the troopers, by making collective
contributions known as the chunda funds, bought new horses. But when they were engaged
in heavy fighting and lost many horses, then the chunda funds were unable to replace all the
horses. In the long run this encouraged a tendency among the troopers to shy away from
combat, so as to avoid casualties to their horses. So the army intervened and paid monetary
compensations to encourage the troopers to fight. When the 4th Sikh Cavalry lost many
horses in action against the mutineers of 1857, the army paid each trooper Rs 150. This
measure was a vast improvement on the custom prevalent in the princely militaries, in
which the troopers were responsible for their horses. If their mounts died, then the troopers
were discharged. This explains the reluctance of the cavalry of the indigenous powers to
clash with the Raj’s mounted force.

In the 19th century, the evolution of the colonial army’s uniforms reflected a trend

\[56\] Minute on the organization of the army, Ch. 4, Pension system, para 8, 28, 11 Oct. 1875, Norman
minutes.

\[57\] Supplementary report, p.19; To the Governor General from C. Wood, London, no.77, 24 Feb. 1860,
Military despatches of the Secretary of State; Scinde Horse, Brigadier Park’s Report, camp Bairseah, Progs.

towards greater comfort. Occasionally, comfortable uniforms cost the army more, but at the same time they raised the soldier’s combat effectiveness. The dress of the Peshawar and the Hazara Mountain Levies was troublesome as their tight trousers were unsuitable for climbing the hills, and the sleeves of the jackets had to be cut near the armpits while loading and unloading the pack animals. So this uniform was replaced by a Khaki blouse and loose trousers which were better adapted to combat in the hills. These uniforms required more cloth. So, for each uniform, the army had to spend Anna 8 more.  

The army spent money in making arrangements for supplying food to the units deployed overseas. This was necessary because the units stationed abroad suffered an extraordinary rate of sickness. This was due to the failure of the soldiers to cook their own food properly. The soldiers generally cooked their food in chulas (earthen or stone ovens) fired with twigs. This was both fatiguing and time consuming. The army’s initial expenditure in making arrangements to feed the soldiers reduced the long-term financial loss, which the military force faced due to the pensions and the gratuities which it had to pay to the soldiers demobilized due to sickness. Moreover, the reduction of the frontline strength reduced the overseas units’ combat edge. So the army evolved a long administrative tail for providing food and water to the soldiers who were deployed outside India. Each infantry regiment stationed abroad had 10 coolies, 20 water carriers, 10 sweepers and 1 cook.

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59 R.H. Davies, Secy. of Punjab Govt. Military Department, to the Secy. of Govt. of India, Progs. no. 285, 17 Dec. 1860, M.D.P. March 1861.

Mark Harrison writes that health care for the soldiers raised the army’s cohesion, which in turn raised its military efficiency. The British probably understood this. Betterment of living conditions resulted in much expenditure on the army. The army believed that, by keeping the soldiers healthy, the combat potential of the force was raised. The army was convinced that the ordinary populace was disease-prone. If any epidemic broke out among the civilians (who were considered more vulnerable to such diseases), the soldiers would catch such ailments if lodged with them. So the soldiers were segregated from the civilians by accommodating the former in lines.\(^1\) In the second half of the 19\(^{th}\) century, the hutting allowance for each regiment cost the army Rs 3,116.\(^2\) The British believed that accumulated dirt gave rise to health problems. The only way to check it was by building new lines. Any lines which were more than 40 years old were demolished and new lines were constructed for better hygiene. Again, when diseases like small pox spread, the British medical opinion advised the army to demolish the old lines and construct new ones in their


\(^2\) Hannyngton, to the offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Memorandum from Capt. H. Hyde, Undersecretary to the Govt. of India, to the offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Progs. nos. 392-93, 25 Jan. 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.
When the line of 36th Infantry Regiment became unhealthy after rainfall, the army immediately reconstructed them. In order to check the spread of cholera, the army ordered that there should not be any stagnant pool of water in front of the soldiers’ lines. The army did re-roofing and re-thatching of the lines. Beams, doors and windows were also supplied to the soldiers. Strict instructions were given for making the barracks spacious. The army provided recreational facilities to the soldiers in barracks. Each unit was encouraged to build aesthetic gardens, which provided an atmosphere necessary for a healthy mind. Fresh air, fruits and vegetables, necessary for good health, were available from the gardens. The authorities provided seeds, tools, land and gardeners freely. The 6th Poona division got Rs 400 per year for maintaining such gardens.

There was a direct linkage between sickness and the frontline strength. The Marathas considered hospital arrangements unnecessary. Hence epidemics frequently decimated their forces. During the Second Afghan War (1878-80), the 1st Gurkha Rifles

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63 *Army Regulations*, p.81; Lieutenant Colonel C. Davidson, Resident at Hyderabad, to Major General R.J.H. Birch, Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Governor General’s camp, Mirzapore, Progs. nos. 158, 368, 1 and 14 Feb. 1861, M.D.P. March 1861; Circular to officers commanding divisions, districts, brigades, stations and cantonments, circular no. 32/E, 22 Feb. 1865, Adjutant General’s circulars, vol. 5.

64 Note on the garrison and fortress of Agra, Calcutta, 31 Dec. 1873, Norman minutes; Proceedings of a committee assembled by the order of Lieutenant Colonel Pelly commanding at Aurangabad to report upon the lines of the Hyderabad Cavalry, Proceedings of a committee assembled by order of the officer commanding at Aurangabad to examine and report on the infantry lines of the Hyderabad Contingent, Major B.R. Powell, President of committee on lines at Aurangabad to the staff officer at Aurangabad, Progs. no. 371, 5 Dec. and 6 Dec. 1860, M.D.P. March 1861.

65 *Army Regulations*, pp.83-84.
suffered more casualties from disease than from the Afghan enemy. So, for pragmatic reasons, the Indian Army always enquired in detail about how many soldiers were ill at one time, and the type of disease(s) they had contracted. The army utilized technology to check the spread of epidemics. The senior military officers used the telegraph for quick exchange of information, to know where epidemics like cholera had broken out, and to implement counter-measures to suppress the disease.\textsuperscript{66} The effectiveness of the army depended not only how quickly it could suppress the spread of diseases, but also on the speed of processing the sick and wounded soldiers and transferring them back to the battle zones. So money was no obstacle when it came to improving the hospital facilities. The \textit{kuccha} hospitals were thatched, and hence vulnerable to fire. Moreover, moisture destroyed the walls. So these hospitals were reconstructed with concrete. The hospital at Aurangabad was situated near the market, from where continuous noise disturbed the patients. Due to faulty construction, neither air nor light entered the hospital. But free circulation of air was necessary for the patients' health, and to reduce the danger of fire. The accommodation facilities were also inadequate. So a new spacious building, 6000 sq. feet in area, was constructed at a new site where there were trees (for giving shade to the sick and for cooking meals).\textsuperscript{67} Hospitals with low roofs were remade. Under the new plans, some


\textsuperscript{67} Proceedings of a committee assembled at Aurangabad under instruction received from the Quarter Master General for the purpose of fixing the site of the lines of Aurangabad station, Progs. no. 370, 24 Dec. 1860, M.D.P. March 1861.
cavalry hospitals had tiled rooms. Bad sanitation claimed many soldiers’ lives. So the army supplied bedding and blankets in the hospitals. In the cold, damp regions, socks and flannels were also issued to the soldiers. And the authorities regularly enquired about the sanitary state and conditions of the latrines, and took steps to improve them. The hospitals had improved in the post Mutiny era because the pre 1857 hospitals lacked a water supply and proper drainage.

In case the army was unable to provide health care, it financially compensated those who had suffered. The army hoped that this would strengthen the conviction among the soldiers that the military bureaucracy cared for them, a conviction which in turn would tighten their bonds of loyalty to the army. The army supplied a doctor when a regiment marched from one place to another place. A soldier, Bani Ram, became blind due to ophthalmia. He contracted it in 1860, when his regiment was marching from Gonah towards Jhansi, and there was no doctor in his unit. The commandant was ordered to explain why no doctor was accompanying the unit as per the rules. The soldier had to be demobilized, but since he had served for only 2 years, he was ineligible for pension. As a special case, on humanitarian ground, he was paid Rs 66.

Note on the station of Morar and fortress of Gwalior, Accommodation for the troops, Calcutta, 19 Jan. 1874, Norman minutes.

Barat, Bengal Native Infantry, p. 172; Army Regulations, p. 83; Memorandum on possible military operations beyond our trans Indus frontier, para 8, Minute on the organization of the army, Ch. 2, Bengal Army, para 36, 43, 45, 11 Oct. 1875, Norman minutes.

Major S. Becher, Deputy Adjutant General, to the Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Bacon, to the offg. Deputy Adjutant General, Fort William, Progs. nos. 200, 202, 17 Oct. 1860, 9 March 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.
There were some welfare measures which harmed the combat potential and were financially expensive for the army. The life pension scheme involved a long-term expenditure for the army, as it had to pay for retired personnel till their deaths. Despite this, this scheme failed to integrate the soldiers totally with the war machine and reduced the army’s combat power. This was because life pension attracted the old soldiers and not the newly enlisted personnel, as the soldiers became eligible for life pensions after a minimum of 20 years of service. The pension rules were framed to reward the old men, who were encouraged to stay in the ranks, though it harmed the efficiency of the force.\(^71\)

The army followed several programmes which aimed to create the picture of a benevolent Sarkar among the soldiers but raised the army’s expenditure. The army gave pensions to the militarily useless troops even though they were technically not eligible for such rewards. Those soldiers who became physically unfit for military duties after 14 years of service were deliberately retained for another year, even though they were useless from the combat perspective, so that they became eligible for life pensions.\(^72\)

The pre British Indian militaries followed the notorious practice of going into campaigns with the soldiers’ families. This not only reduced such forces’ mobility but also created enormous logistical problems. One of the primary reasons for the destruction of the

\(^{71}\) Supplementary report, pp.35-36, 55; Minute on the organization of the army, Ch. 5, Pension system, para 2, 11 Oct. 1875, Norman minutes; Roll of the 13th Punjab Infantry who appeared before the invaliding committee, Meerut, Progs. no. 103, 20 May 1861, M.D.P. Oct. 1861.

\(^{72}\) Minute on the organization of the army, Ch. 4, Pension system, para 9, 11 Oct. 1875, Norman minutes.
Maratha Army in the Third Battle of Panipat was because it was followed by an enormous host of non-combatants. The British abolished this practice. Nevertheless, the Indian Army sought to keep the soldiers’ spirits high by allowing them furlough (paid leave) to visit their villages. Furlough was introduced in 1796. This measure was necessary as most of the soldiers were married. Except in the Madras Army, (where the wives stayed with the regiments within the regimental lines but were not allowed to follow the units in campaigns), only 15% of the troops were allowed to bring their wives to the cantonments. The rest of the soldiers’ wives remained in the villages. To further motivate the soldiers to perform well in battles, those regiments which participated in operations and suffered combat losses were awarded extra furlough. Again, for encouraging overseas service, those units which volunteered for duties abroad, were allowed a furlough of 3.5 months before and after the deployments. The soldiers were generally allowed 3.5 months paid leave each year. If, they contracted illness in the meantime, then the army, to project a benevolent image, extended the furlough period by another 2 to 4 months on humanitarian grounds.  

The army had to pay salaries to the soldiers even when they were on leave. This welfare measure compromised the army’s fighting potential. Due to furlough, the corps were 15% weaker between April to November. Units stationed in strategically vulnerable areas like the northwest frontier, where the living conditions were exceptionally harsh, got extra furlough. So such units were always 34% below strength. As the war clouds gathered

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at the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century, one lobby in the army was against allowing so much leave, as furlough reduced the frontline strength. But Major General Birdwood cautioned that furlough was necessary for both economic and physical reasons and for smooth recruitment. Most of the soldiers were from the agricultural families. So, during harvests, when extra hands were necessary in their farms, they demanded furlough. If they were not allowed leave, Birdwood warned, then not only would they be alienated, but also in future no small farmers’ younger sons (whom the army adored) would join. Again, enough accommodation for all the soldiers’ wives did not exist in the lines. So for domestic reasons, soldiers must be allowed to visit their families. Birdwood’s view was similar to the report submitted by the Punjab School in 1857. To prevent another mutiny, the British then attempted to learn about the Indians in greater detail. It accelerated information gathering processes in the colonial state. So the Punjab School was ordered to gather information about the soldiers’ thought-processes. The Punjab School claimed that the soldiers’ mentality could be reconstructed from their ballads and proverbs. After analyzing them, it was clear to the members of the Punjab School that the soldiers hated being away from their land and families for a long time.74

Another imperial technique for constructing a combat ethos was by collectively honouring the men of the units, by awarding colours to gallant regiments. There was also inculcation of the belief that to lose colours was worse than death. When the colours were worn out, they were replaced at the government’s expense. Colours being a ceremonial incentive, motivating the soldiers by supplying colours, was one way of running the army.

74 Army Regulations, p.43; Supplementary report, p.30; Army committee, vol. 3, p.548; Memorandum on the distribution of the army in Bengal, para 13, camp Muzaffarnagar, 14 March 1863, Norman minutes.
cheaply. But in the late 19th century this welfare technique proved to be an Achilles heel for the forces in the battle zones. Due to rise in firepower, the troops needed to be scattered in the battlefields, instead of being concentrated around the colours which were meant to provide the rallying points. Colours became an obstacle as they attracted enemy firepower.75

IV

Army Bureaucracy as Supplier of Welfare Incentives

The army crafted an enormous bureaucratic apparatus for the quick and efficient delivery of rewards. This logistical burden forced administrative expansion of the colonial state. This focus on the colonial army's internal administration is relevant to the historiography of the colonial state. One School argues that the British Indian state's reach was limited.76 This minimalist position is challenged by D.M. Peers who points out that the colonial state was authoritarian, as it was backed by powerful armed forces.77 I will argue that the British attempt to introduce European-style army administration was the principal force behind the

75 *Army Regulations*, p.96; Circular to officers commanding infantry regiments, Adjutant General's office, camp Moodki, circular no. 27/N, 15 March 1864, Adjutant General's circulars, vol. 4; Minute on the organization of the army, Ch. 2, Bengal Army, Proposals for all regiments to have colours, para 31, 11 Oct. 1875, Norman minutes.


colonial state's growth. One of the key features of the Western military establishment was
the methodical distribution of largesse to the soldiers. This administrative task forced the
colonial authorities to collect information about the Indians and to introduce bureaucratic
mechanisms which penetrated to the lowest level of the indigenous society.

The army crafted a surveillance scheme for keeping the retired soldiers on the right
track. This forced the army to create new administrative posts which extended the reach of
the state to all the towns and villages. Pension was distributed through the pension pay
masters. India was divided into many administrative circles and for each circle there was
such an official. They, along with the district officers (each district had such a military
official), monitored the conduct of the retired troops. Their pensions were stopped if they
indulged in disloyal activities.78

For distributing family pension, the state had to collect information about the
private lives of the soldiers—when and whom they married, where their families were
stationed, who else constituted the families, the ages of the family members etc. All this
resulted in the fusion of public and private domains. The Adjutant General’s department
was responsible for providing salaries, pensions and gratuities to the soldiers. For
investigating the claims of family pensions, and the settle the estates of the dead soldiers,
recruiting staff officers were appointed. All these tasks involved an expansion of
paperwork. Nominal rolls of the soldiers, maintained both in English and in the vernacular,
contained information about the soldiers’ careers, their family members’ names and the

78 Circular by H.W. Norman, Adjutant General, Adjutant General’s office, Calcutta, circular no. 2493/A, 25
June 1861, Adjutant General’s circulars, vol. 1; A.P. Macdonnell, Secy. to the India Govt., Home Department, to the Chief Secy. to the Bengal Govt., Simla, Progs. no. 7056, 8 July 1887, Proceedings of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Aug. 1887, Judicial Department, W.B.S.A.
villages in which they resided. When military personnel died, then vernacular notices were sent to their heirs. These contained information about when and where they should present themselves. Occasionally civil administration got fused with the military set-up for aiding in such tasks. The soldiers' relatives applying from Purneah and Darjeeling had to correspond with the collectors of the respective districts for getting in touch with their family members within various regiments scattered in India. 79

The army's demand for plots forced the expansion of the Raj's rural administrative set up and this process started in the last half of the 18th century. Land was collected through the revenue department. The residents and the district collectors were in charge of acquiring land. Such duties involved lot of paperwork. These officials had to maintain registers containing the names, ranks and ages of the soldiers, and details of land grants. These documents were then sent to the Governor General who passed them on to the Board of Revenue. The grantees were given money by the government for buying agricultural implements. This money was distributed through the collectors. They had to inform the army pay masters every month about what was going on. After their retirement, soldiers got plots from the army, where they constructed their own houses. On the death of the soldiers, the land passed to their heirs who paid 1/10th of the produce to the zamindars and a low rent to the government. If they failed to pay the zamindars and the Sarkar, the plots were taken away and sold to the highest bidder. 80


80 James Colebrook, Supplement to the Collection of Regulations (Calcutta, 1807), Regulations for invalided sepoys, 18 Feb. 1789.
Napoleon’s statement that an army marched on its stomach is well known. But the colonial army’s top brass was so concerned with supplying liquor to the soldiers that it seemed that the troops marched on liquor also. The Commissary General was in charge of storing and distributing the liquor to the soldiers. Two big depots of liquor were Calcutta and Kanpur. Kanpur was the centre from which liquor was sent to various places of north and northwest India for distribution among the detachments.\textsuperscript{81} In the 1860s the army went on a godown building spree for storing liquor. Even then the commissariat godowns for storing liquor proved inadequate. So Rs 2863 was spent on converting the cattle sheds in Kanpur into liquor godowns to prevent loss due to evaporation from the casks. In 1861, for converting an unfinished barrack at Peshawar into a liquor godown, the army spent Rs 10,000. Occasionally, the army was more interested in storing liquor than accommodating the wounded and the sick soldiers. Orders were issued that if storage facilities were not available, then the liquor should be stored at the hospitals even at the cost of the patients. At certain places, like in Dinapore, the army encroached on the civilian hospitals and used them for storing liquor.\textsuperscript{82} The Commander-in-Chief was alarmed at the rising rate of liquor consumption among the soldiers. They bought large amounts of alcohol from the bazaars, and got into debt. So, in 1862, canteens were opened which provided the soldiers with

\textsuperscript{81} Thompson, to the offg. Secy. to the Govt of India, Military Department, Lieutenant G. Newmarch, Assistant to Chief Engineer, Punjab, to the Military Secy. to the Govt. of Punjab, Lahore Progs. nos. 441, 444, 3 Jan. 1861, 15 Feb. 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.

\textsuperscript{82} H. Andrew, Executive Engineer, Dinapore division, to the Superintending Engineer, Bihar Circle, Newmarch, to Major G. Hutchinson, Military Secy. to Govt. of Punjab, Lahore, Thompson, to the offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Fort William, 12 Jan. 1861, 25 Jan. 1861, 5 Feb. 1861, Progs. nos. 442-43, M.D.P. March 1861.
limited amounts of alcohol.\textsuperscript{83}

The Quarter Master General of the army's task was housing the soldiers and upkeep of their barracks. The soldiers demolished old lines themselves. However, when they constructed new lines, the P.W.D. cooperated with the commanding officers, if the task exceeded the capacity of army's military engineers. Each barrack had deep wells which did not become dry even during summer. Boring apparatuses for the wells were provided by the P.W.D.\textsuperscript{84}

Construction and repairing of the latrines, and construction of watering troughs (for watering the horses) was done by the Military Works Service. In each station, the medical officers guided the commanding officers in regard to sanitation. The sanitary officers were responsible for testing the liquor supplied to the soldiers. For the above mentioned tasks, the army needed many doctors even in peacetime. The army wanted Indian doctors, as they were cheap and easily available. The army's demand for medical personnel probably forced the government to establish medical colleges, and this encouraged the growth of the medical profession in India. The army recruited Indian doctors from the medical colleges of


\textsuperscript{84} Army Regulations, p.81; Circular to officers commanding divisions, districts, brigades, stations and cantonments, circular no.32/E, 22 Feb. 1865, Adjutant General's circulars, vol. 5; Lieutenant Colonel R. Phayre, Quarter Master General, to the Secy. to the Bombay Govt., Military Department, From the offg. Deputy Quarter Master General, to the Quarter Master General, Davidson to Birch, Balfour and Lieutenant Colonel R.S. Simpson, Military Finance Commissioners, to the Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Progs. nos. 362, 368-69, 411, 9 Jan. 1861, 31 Jan. 1861, 1 Feb. 1861, 6 March 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.
Soldiers’ Grievances and the Army’s Responses

The limits of British policy to construct loyalty through the welfare bureaucracy, become clear from the soldiers’ perceptions, which are evident from their petitions. An action-reaction dialectic shaped the interaction between the army personnel and the military bureaucracy. The troops demanded redress if they perceived a qualitative or quantitative decline in the distribution of incentives. The bureaucracy responded favourably. The texture of demands and the army’s response were shaped by the theoretical paradigm through which the soldiers viewed the army and vice versa. The troops viewed their relations with the army as partly contractual and partly patriarchal. At times the soldiers bargained because they felt that the army had not fulfilled all the obligations of the contract. Occasionally, the troops demanded more because because they conceived that the army, being their guardian, would oblige them.

As the Raj monopolized the military labour market of India, the potential soldiers had no other employers to fall back upon. Being aware of their weak position in the power game, they never challenged the Sarkar directly. So the demands of the soldiers were always clothed as ‘humble petitions’. Being dependent on the army for sustenance, the

85 *Army Regulations*, pp. 83, 115; Dr. J. Forsyth, Inspector General, Medical Department, to Birch, Military Department, Fort William, Progs. no. 147, M.D.P. March 1861.

soldiers conceived the war machine as their ‘mother’ who breast-fed them and cherished her sons.  They felt that by destroying the army they would get nothing, just as children would derive no benefits by destroying their mother. Hence, to get their dues, they pressured the army, but never aimed to break it. So open mutinies were rare. The realities of the power structure and their intellectual paradigm made them somewhat fatalistic. The soldiers’ view as regards service in the army was ‘Kabhi Suk Aur Kabhi Dhuk, Angrez Ka Naukar’.  

After 1857, the British were neither bent on revenge on all the Indians, nor did they want to stop their recruitment. This was because they understood that, with the limited number of white troops available to them, they had to depend on the Indians whether they liked it or not. For the 1857 catastrophe, the British held responsible their faulty policies and not the soldiers’ mentality. The annexation of Awadh and mismanagement by the British officers were regarded as the principal causes of the uprising. Therefore the imperialists attempted to chalk out policies which suited the Indian soldiers’ nature. The Indians were not portrayed as untrustworthy by nature, or as incarnations of evil. The British viewed them neither as machines nor as animals. In imperial eyes, the soldiers were...

87 Wilson, Madras Cavalry, p.71.


89 Field Marshal Earl Roberts of Kandahar, Forty One Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief (London, 1897, reprint,1898), pp.231-44; MacMunn, The Armies, pp.82-105; Supplementary report, pp.97.
not automatons, but ordinary men of flesh and blood with feelings, passions and prejudices, who must be treated sympathetically. The British officers were warned that their arrogance and intolerance had caused 1857. Evangelicalism was on the run. The declared policy was that the religious customs and prejudices of the Indians should be respected.  

Occasionally the soldiers’ demands were shaped by their religious scruples, and the authorities gave in to the soldiers’ pressure. In 1860, a Sikh regiment demanded borax and ghee for washing their hair. On religious grounds, they refused to use the marine soap provided by the army. In the end, the army, instead of supplying 2 maunds of marine soap, offered to each regiment 8 maunds of borax and 10 maunds of ghee. When the ordinary Indians were not getting enough rice to eat, the soldiers, aware of their special bargaining power, got costly ghee from the army.

The army could not afford to be tough while discharging soldiers, because it wanted a special collaborative relationship with the Indian populace who manned the Raj’s ultimate line of defence. During the demobilization of the 13th Punjab Infantry’s personnel at Meerut in 1861, the army decided to provide all the men over 8 years service, gratuities amounting to 12 months’ pay. This scheme failed to satisfy them. So, to stifle protests, many were promoted before being discharged. This enabled them to enjoy higher social

90 Supplementary report, pp.30, 65-66; Army Regulations, p.94; To officers commanding districts, divisions and brigades, by Haythorne, Adjutant General’s office, Simla, circular no.77/N, 23 July 1864, Adjutant General’s circulars, vol. 4.

91 Thompson, to the offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, Fort William, Progs. no. 43, 22 Feb. 1860, M.D.P. March 1860.
status, pay and other privileges. The rest were absorbed in the Meerut Police.  

Frequently, the Indian officers protested. As they were politically and militarily more important than the privates, the army could not afford to alienate them. In 1861 the Central Indian Horse was amalgamated with the Meade’s Horse as part of the overall military policy to reduce the Indian Army’s size in the mutiny’s aftermath. The amalgamation of these two units demanded the discharge of 22 Jemadars and 49 Dufadars. To get rid of them, the army offered gratuity amounting to 6 months’ pay. They rejected this offer and demanded bigger gratuities along with employment in the mounted police of Punjab. The salary of the cavalry police was higher than that of the irregular cavalry. In addition, the Indian officers demanded promotion. Colonel J. Travers, the officer on the spot, lost his nerve, and urged the government to accept the demands. He warned there would otherwise be gross indiscipline. The storm of 1857 had just subsided and the government decided not to take any risk. The gratuity was increased to 12 month’s pay and all the discharges in the Bengal Cavalry were made voluntary.

All these incidents also unnerved the Secretary of State in the metropole. To prevent any probable outbreaks, Charles Wood decided to play safe by ordering that those Purbiya regiments, which had remained loyal during 1857-59, should be retained. He reminded the army that when the units were raised, the men had had natural expectations of

92 Scott, to the Assistant Adjutant General, Calcutta, 10 July 1861, Roll of the 13th Punjab Infantry who appeared before the invaliding committee, Meerut, Progs. no. 103, 20 May 1861, M.D.P. Oct. 1861.

93 Extract from the proceedings of the Govt. of India, in the Foreign Department, Progs. no. 538, 15 March 1861, M.D.P. March 1861; Circular to officers commanding divisions, districts and regiments of native cavalry, by Haythorne, circular no.82/N, 19 Aug. 1863, Adjutant General’s circulars, vol. 3.
permanent employment. So even if the total disbandment of some of the units was necessary to avoid large-scale disturbances, as many personnel as possible should be retained and, the rest should be discharged with bigger gratuities.94

The soldiers reacted to the malfunctioning of the welfare bureaucracy. Mir Jafir, the late commandant of the 2nd Jezailchee Corps complained in 1860 to General Robert Napier that about one and half years previously, the government had promised him a pension of Rs 200 per month. However, he was yet to receive any money. Napier sent the petition to Fred Roberts who was looking after the pensioners’ claims.95

Occasionally the army acted without any direct pressure from below. It assumed that if it did not supply rewards to the soldiers then there would be mutinies. This overreaction on part of the sahibs was probably due to an acute sense of powerlessness. The Indian population ran into millions. White terror was represented by the British soldiers and their supply was limited.96 They were conscious of the necessity of not alienating the collaborators needed for manning the coercive machinery. To meet the emergency during 1857, the army raised many temporary local levies and also expanded the size of the existing irregular units. After the crisis was over, the army had no use for units like the Awadh Police Cavalry and the Hodson’s Horse. Even though these men, facing discharge,

94 To the Governor General from C. Wood, London, nos. 59, 98. 14 Feb. 1860, 8 March 1860, Military despatches of the Secretary of State.


96 General George Chesney, Indian Polity: A View of Administration in India (1894, reprint, New Delhi, 1976), pp. 206, 208, 211, 216, 223.
did not pose any direct threat, the army lacked the guts to throw them out without any monetary compensation. However, the volume of rewards awarded was linked with the level of loyalty displayed. The army favoured the Punjabis who actively aided in crushing the revolt and discriminated against the men from the Ganga-Yamuna doab who actually engineered the rebellion. Those Indians who joined the British side before November 1858, when imperial victory was still uncertain, were given gratuities amounting to 6 months pay (to those from Punjab) and 3 months pay (to the personnel from the Ganga-Yamuna doab) on being discharged. Again, those who joined the British when the rebel cause was hopeless were given gratuities amounting to 3 months pay (to the Punjabis) and 2 months pay (to the Hindustanis), on being discharged.  

Conclusion:

The army supplied a host of incentives to the soldiers to project a benevolent image in order to legitimize its authority over its personnel and to extract sacrifices from them. A disciplinary infrastructure to control the troops was enmeshed with the army’s policy of ‘caring’ for its men. However the army’s control over the soldiers was mainly hegemonic rather than coercive. The imperialists aimed to drive a cleavage among the Indian privates and the officers by supplying the latter with a greater amount of rewards. The welfare scheme gave adequate space to the soldiers for protest by petitions. And the soldiers were conscious of the special position they enjoyed vis a vis the civilians in the colonial framework. Due to the presence of an extensive bureaucratic machinery, the army, by its

97 From the Secy. to the Govt. of India, Military Department, to the Adjutant General, Fort William, Progs. no. 726, 11 March 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.
quick response to the soldiers’ demands, was able to contain the latters’ grievances. Thus
the army was able to keep its loyalty mechanism intact.

The reward structure evolved in halting stages. 1857 represented both continuity and change as far as the evolution of the welfare bureaucracy was concerned. The Mutiny was no break for incentives like military jagirs etc. However in the pre 1857 period, due to Bentinck’s policy of reducing expenditure, the state abolished many privileges like batta etc. But after 1857, as a reaction to the rebellion, the state became more generous. Privileges were not only reintroduced but also elaborated and systematized. Further, the imperialists learnt from 1857 and became more sensitive to the Indians’ religious sensibilities. Another reason for the implementation of the elaborate welfare network in the second half of 19th century was because the army was anxious that the quantum of welfare measures provided were inadequate for generating loyalty. As the British were not confident of their position, there was much debate within the army about how best to implement the welfare mechanism. The starting point of this programme was 1859: the immediate aftermath of the Mutiny; and it reached its peak just before 1914 due to the imperial attempt to gear up the army in response to the worsening international scenario.

The colonial army provides us a window to see the colonial state’s structure. Since the army lacked the requisite administrative machinery for distributing supplies, it cooperated with the Raj’s civilian bureaucracy, like the collectors, P.W.D. The multifarious demands of supplying the soldiers and the necessity of watching their activities transformed the night watchman state into an ever expanding bureaucratic state. The colonial state consolidated itself by a balanced synthesis of indigenous elements (like bazaars etc.) and imported Western techniques (like gratuity etc.). Colonialism depended on collaboration,
and military collaboration was most vital. The welfare mechanism, and not merely brute force, prevented rebellions among the indigenous military collaborators. And this sustained colonialism in South Asia. Further, welfare measures directed towards the units stationed outside the subcontinent made it possible for the British to use the Indian Army as an instrument of power projection throughout Asia.