Chapter 3

The Response of the Martial Race Lobby: The Handbook Programme, 1890 - 1913

The Sepoy Army, was hungry for manpower. The subcontinent was a vast military labour market overflowing with potential recruits. This market was dominated by one supra-regional power—the Raj. India appeared to the British to consist of a complex mosaic of tribes and castes with varying degrees of loyalty and differing soldiering capabilities. The clash between two opposing recruiting ideologies (the Martial Race and the Anti-Martial Race theories) made it imperative for the British to decide whom to recruit, and from which region. Hence a sort of anthropological survey was initiated in late 19th century by the army high command. At that time, the Martial Race lobby was dominant. In accordance with its orders, a group of British officers carried out the project of the disaggregation and categorization of the colonial subjects, for the effective utilization of their manpower. The information these officers compiled was later published in the form of Handbooks from 1890 onwards.

The historiography of the Indian Army fails to present the difference between the Handbooks and the original proponents of the Martial Race theory.¹ The outlook of the Handbook authors, and the way they modified the Martial Race ideology in reaction to the Anti-Martial Race ideology, are neglected. The Handbooks not only influenced the army’s recruitment pattern; they also throw light on the complex ideological structures of British India.

I

The Background

Field Marshal Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from 1885 to 1893, was the principal proponent of the Martial Race theory. Lord Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from 1902 to 1909, carried Roberts' policy to its logical conclusion. So, under Roberts and Kitchener, the hunt for the 'martial races' began. Roberts and Kitchener ordered a group of British officers to study the food habits, religion, customs and social norms of various groups in order to find out which of them were most suitable for induction in the army. Their aim was probably to reshape the Martial Race ideology in the wake of the challenge posed by the Anti-Martial Race lobby.

However, even before the production of the Handbooks, many army officers undertook ethnological studies of various groups in an attempt to aid the army's recruitment programme. Their papers appeared in the Indian Army's professional journal - the Journal of the United Service Institution of India. Lieutenant E. G. Barrow, who happened to be the Deputy Assistant Adjutant General of the Indian Army in the 1880s, attempted an ethnological survey of the Afridi tribe inhabiting Tirah. He divided the Afridis into 8 clans, whose total number of fighting males he calculated to be about 22,500. Barrow found that each clan inhabited a particular area. For example the Aka Khel clan of the Afridis inhabited the Warran valley. He visualized that the British policy of annexation would result in beneficial social changes for the Afridis. Once Tirah was conquered, then '...this great clan of robbers

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would in time, like the Pathans of the Derajat and Eusofzye, settle down into peaceful cultivators and herdsmen or enlist into the army."

Another such ethnological enquiry was conducted by Captain W. H. F. Basevi of the 6th Burma Battalion. His subjects were the Panthyas, the Muslims of Yunnan. He further developed the linkages between demography and recruitment. He calculated that there were 5000000 Panthyas, who could easily supply 10 regiments. He further clarified an ecological perspective. Basevi asserted that the physical geography of Yunnan was such that the inhabitants had to be excellent marchers and inured to exposure both to cold and rain. So they were well suited to the stress and strain of soldiering. Like the Martial Race theorists, he made a connection between food habits and being warlike. The Panthyas, being meat eaters, were regarded as proper fighters.

Captain A. Apthorpe of the 90th Punjabis conducted an ethnological study on the Kachins who inhabited the mountainous tract of north Burma. Apthorpe, Basevi and Barrow accepted Roberts' assumption that warrior races were generally available along the mountainous tracts of the frontier. Further, Apthorpe followed the Martial Race theorists' tendency to link up occupation with war-making capacity. Being agriculturists, the Kachins were regarded as excellent material for the army.

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3 Lieutenant E.G. Barrow, 'Tirah and the Afridi Question', *JUS II*, vol. 8, no. 49 (1881), pp. 172-81. The quotation is from p. 173.


Basevi and Apthorpe shared many of the assumptions of the Martial Race spokesmen, unlike the latter group, they extended their search away from northwest India to other parts of the subcontinent. The Handbook authors continued this trend.

The Raj’s civilian officers also undertook similar surveys. The underlying conviction was that some groups were more tuned towards warfare. So the use of ethnohistory to find the racial origin of the potential recruits was common. H.W. Bellew, the Sanitary Commissioner of Punjab in 1880, tried to argue from linguistic, physiognomie and historical evidences that the Afghans were racially linked with the martial Israelites. The Handbooks emerged against such a background.

II

The Handbooks

The Handbooks’ authors modified, elaborated and added several themes and methodologies. All the Handbook authors were commissioned officers. P. Holland Pryor (who wrote on the Moplahs) was a Major and Eden Vansittart (who focused on the Gurkhas) was a Captain. The authors of the Handbooks were neither senior military commanders nor desk staff officers who sat miles away at head quarters. They were men on active duty and in continuous interaction with Indians. They were recruiting officers. Vansittart was a specialist on the Gurkhas and he was attached with the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Gurkha Rifles. So he was assigned the task of preparing an ethnological compendium on the Gurkhas.


7 Major P. Holland Pryor, Class Handbooks on the Indian Army: Mapillas or Moplahs (Calcutta, 1904); Captain Eden Vansittart, The Gurkhas (1890, reprint, New Delhi, 1980).
These books were written by the officers as part of their professional duty, under orders from the Intelligence Department of the Quarter Master General. The aim of these books was to guide future recruiting officers. Vansittart dedicated his book, which came out in 1890, to Roberts, with the latter's permission. When Vansittart updated his book in 1906, he dedicated that edition to Kitchener. Major A. H. Bingley initiated his survey of the Jats, Gujars and the Ahirs on the orders of the government of India. The aim of these books was the creation and consolidation of knowledge about Indian society, so as to decide on whom to recruit, on what basis, and how to raise the quality of the personnel.  

The format of all the Handbooks was more or less similar. Each author studied 1, 2 or a maximum of 3 groups. Vansittart was concerned with the Gurkhas, Major R. M. Betham with the Marathas and the south Indian Muslims, and Bingley with the Jats, Gujars and the Ahirs. Each book was about 200 pages long and dealt with broadly 5 themes: the geographical distribution of the groups, their religion, their customs, their history till their confrontation with the British, and finally the recruiting procedures that needed to be followed. These books were thus partly descriptive and partly prescriptive.

Each book was updated in the light of new information. Vansittart originally published his treatise on the Gurkhas in 1890. He updated it twice, in 1896 and in 1906. In his later editions his source base became wider. In his 1896 edition, unlike in

8 Vansittart, Gurkhas; idem., Handbooks for the Indian Army: The Gurkhas (Calcutta, 1906) (henceforth Handbooks); Major A.H. Bingley, Caste Handbooks for the Indian Army: Jats, Gujars and Ahirs (Calcutta, 1904).

9 Bingley, Jats, Gujars and Ahirs; Major R.M. Betham, Handbooks for the Indian Army: Marathas and Dekhani Musulmans (Calcutta, 1908).
his earlier work, Vansittart used Doctor Wright’s *History of Nepal* published in 1877 and C. A. Bendall’s *Journey in Nepal* which came out in 1886. Further, in the 1896 edition, Vansittart studied 2 new groups of eastern Nepal, the Newars and the Kirantis, in an attempt to widen the recruiting base.\(^\text{10}\) This reflected the development of empire’s feedback apparatus with time.

Most of the books concentrated on particular groups coming from a particular region. The emphasis was on the areas where the highest concentrations of the ‘martial’ groups were present. Bingley, while collecting data on the Sikhs, put emphasis on areas of central Punjab like Manjha and Malwa.\(^\text{11}\) None of these books were all-India studies. The only exception is P.D. Bonarjee’s book. The empire’s civilian officers, including British officers like Bellew and Indians like Bonarjee, conducted ethnological studies at the behest of the army. Interestingly, in Bonarjee’s conception, the Santhals and the Bheels were also ‘martial races’. Further, unlike Roberts, Bonarjee believed that ‘martial’ groups could also be found in south India. The Tamils and the Malayalis appeared to be ‘martial’ to Bonarjee. This probably was a tactic to accommodate some of the views of the Anti-Martial Race lobby. Almost all the Handbook authors had a bias towards men from north India. Only Bonarjee and Betham were free from it.\(^\text{12}\)

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There was constant intercourse between the army's ethnographers and the colonial anthropologists. H.H. Risley, the initiator of ethnography in India, influenced the conceptual framework of the Handbook writers. The methodological assumptions of his work *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, published in 1891, influenced Vansittart's analytical matrix. Risley even wrote the introduction of Vansittart's 1896 edition. Risley pointed out that the ethnographic programme had 2 aspects: recording the various social and cultural usages of the different groups, and a comparative analysis of human anatomy. The Victorian anthropologists like Risley believed that different races had separate physiological and moral qualities. The growth of anthropometry in Western Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries influenced colonial India's physical anthropologists. They were actually influenced by the anthropometric classification system of Paul Broca, the French ethnological expert. Risley accepted skull measurement as a technique of ethnic categorization. According to him, the basis of distinction among the different indigenous groups was the difference in physiognomy and bone structure. Risley claimed that the width of the head was related to racial origin. The data on the width of the heads of various groups was measured through the cephalic index. This showed the relation of the maximum breadth of the head to its maximum length, the latter being taken as 100. The higher the cephalic index, claimed Risley, the more the Mongolian blood. The cephalic index of the Limbus was 84.3 while that of the Murmis was 78.5. So the Limbus were regarded as more Mongolian than the Murmis. Vansittart considered the Mongolians to be good warriors. So, for recruitment, he favoured the Limbus rather than the

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13 Mary Des Chene in 'Military Ethnology in British India', *South Asia Research*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1999), p. 126, writes that the Handbooks' authors were not interested in the methodologies propounded by the colonial anthropologists.
Murmis. Risley also arranged the various groups according to the nasomalar index. For Risley, people with thin noses belonged to higher racial categories. To measure the length and breadth of the noses the nasomalar index was used. This tool was first introduced by the anthropologist Oldfield Thomas for measuring the projections or depressions of the base of the noses of different people in relation to the outer edge of the orbit of the noses, which expressed in any particular group the preponderance of the Mongolian or Caucasian element. Longer and thinner noses gave a higher nasomalar index. Risley argued that higher the nasomalar index, the superior the race. The nasomalar index of the Newars was 110.2 and that of the Pathans was 117.1. So the Pathans were more favoured than the Newars for recruitment in the Indian Army.14

Baron Cuvier of Switzerland, and the German scholar S. T. Von Soemmering, felt that they had established a linkage between cranial cavity and intelligence. Bingley, while observing the Jats, accepted the view of Dr. Brereton, the author of the Rajputana Gazetteer, that the crania of the Jats were elongated and lower than those of the Brahmins. So the Brahmins had more intelligence, and were thus less suited for soldiering than the ‘obtuse’ Jats.15

However, the Handbook writers neglected many strands of anthropological thought. The late Victorian belief was that people with Mongolian features—broad


cheekbones and scanty beards and moustaches were generally criminals. But Vansittart openly declared that such physical features existed among the Gurkhas and they were not only martial but also loyal.\textsuperscript{16} Denzil Ibbetson linked physique with racial theory. After comparing the facial features of the Rajputs and the Jats, he claimed that both the groups originated from the same racial stock. Bingley disagreed, claiming that ethnically the Rajputs were Scythians while the Jats were Aryans. But later, according to him, the Rajputs absorbed the Aryan culture.\textsuperscript{17}

The Victorian belief was that certain climatic zones resulted in racial degeneration.\textsuperscript{18} James Wise and E. T. Dalton collected anthropometric data on the various castes and tribes inhabiting the differing ecological zones in India. The Handbook authors followed in their footsteps. The assumption of the Martial Race ideologues was that only tall and fair skinned men from colder mountainous regions were genetically suited to become fighters. The 19\textsuperscript{th} century ethnologists like James Forbes, who argued that the inferior races had darker complexions, probably shaped Roberts’ views. Forbes also claimed that south India’s hot climate resulted in the degeneration of the races inhabiting that region. Roberts was also probably influenced by the Company’s theoretician Robert Orme, whose ideas were in turn shaped by the Enlightenment theorist like Montesquieu. The latter assumed a linkage between the degeneration of the physical strength and temperament of the inhabitants with the climate. One representative of the Anti-Martial Race lobby, Rainey,


\textsuperscript{17} Bingley, \textit{Sikhs}, p. 2.

challenged this linkage between climate and martialness. Rainey argued that the short and black Tamils were better soldiers than tall, ‘smart’ and ‘better looking’ men from cold northwest India. The Handbook authors appropriated this critique within their framework. Bingley had written that the submontane Himalayan tracts did not produce proper warriors. Further, he said that though central Punjab became very hot during summer, that region still nurtured the warrior Sikhs. The Handbook writers wanted the enlistment of varied groups—from tall, fair-skinned, thin-nosed Brahmins, to the short, dark-skinned tribals. Betham even argued that the shorter south Indian Marathas were better warriors than the taller races hailing from colder north India. The Handbook writers did not regard height as a reliable criterion for recruitment. All men between 5'2” to 5'9” were considered eligible for recruitment. Among the Gurkhas, the members from the Khas tribe were on the average 5'8” tall and the Gurungs were between 5'6 to 5'2” in height. But the latter were favoured. According to Betham and Pryor, the Deccanis were short and dark, with thick lips and high cheekbones. Yet they considered them better warriors than the north Indians with blue eyes and red lips. Also, valour and stamina were not always equated with good physique. Bingley and Nicholls accepted that the north Indian Brahmins were shorter than the Afghans were. But that did not mean, claimed these officers, that the former group was less courageous. Betham concluded that the popularity of the Pathans and the Punjabi Muslims was because of their superficial qualities: they were showy and dressed picturesquely. The groups like the Marathas, on the other hand, were quiet in demeanour and lacked swagger. So, according to Betham, their military qualities remained unrecognized.19

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Evangelical protagonists like Reverend William Ward of the Serampore Mission used the category ‘race’ very loosely. The Handbooks’ authors, like the Martial Race supporters, followed this trend. For Ward, both the Brahmin caste, as well as the other Hindus, appeared as a race. Such terminological and conceptual confusions were common among the Handbook writers. For Bingley and Nicholls, the Brahmins were simultaneously a race, a tribe and a caste. In Pryor’s eyes, the Moplahs were low caste Hindus who were also tribals. After conversion, he claimed, they became a race. So besides biological origins, customs also determined the British concept of race. Bingley held that ethnically the Rajputs and the Jats were from the Scythian stock. But due to social factors, the Rajputs constituted a distinct ethnic group vis a vis the Jats. Occasionally, religion became the chief determinant. According to Bingley, Sikhism made Sikh Jats a different race from the Hindu Jats, though from the biological perspective both these groups were similar. At times race had a residential connotation. Vansittart termed the Gurkha tribes a race because they inhabited a particular tract of central Nepal. However such labels were flexible. In the last decade of the 19th century, as the British demand for the Gurkhas increased, Vansittart included the Limbus from eastern Nepal into the Gurkha category. 20

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20 For the loose use of the term race by the Martial Race theorists see pp. 38-39 of Ch. 1. Bingley and Nicholls, Brahmins, pp. 11, 43; Pryor, Moplahs, Preface, p. 17; Bingley, Sikhs, pp. 2, 18, 50-54; idem.,
Besides observing the bone structure and the skin colour, the military ethnographers also followed the other dictum of the colonial anthropologists in observing the behavioural patterns and the social mores of the various groups. On what sort of sources did they depend for this?

The Handbook authors utilized both Indian and British sources. Among the latter, both unofficial and official sources were used. Census reports, especially those of 1881 and 1891, were considered for analyzing the demographic patterns. For general information on habitats, the Gazetteers were consulted. It seems that the Raj undertook the project of census surveys and the Gazetteer-writing programme to satisfy the army's hunger for knowing the colonized. What the individual officers tried to do before the origin of the Handbook project, the Handbook writers did more efficiently with the aid of census data. They calculated the male population of the probable group of recruits in different districts, which were then subdivided into tehsils and taluks. This shows that the imperialists had travelled a long way from the position of the enquiry committee of 1859, when the military elites failed to demarcate the various recruiting regions clearly. The improvement of the grassroot level knowledge of the colonial state in the late 19th century was proved clearly by Vansittart's ability to calculate the number of villages in Nepal.21

For precise information about the activities of the various groups, the histories of the colonial historians like Lane Poole and Lepel Griffin came in handy. These sources can be categorized as ethnohistories, as the European observers noted down

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21 Vansittart, Handbooks, Appendix C, p. 28; Bingley, Sikhs, Appendix A, pp. i-vi, 41-58; Supplementary report, p. 27.
the food habits, dress, marriage customs etc of the various groups they encountered. The Europeans wrote similar accounts when they first came into contact with the tribes of the New World in the 16th century. Such ethnohistories constituted the building block of the army's ethnological programme in India. The Handbook writers used such works to trace the histories of the groups concerned. Those communities which had displayed 'martial' proclivities, were deemed warlike enough to be inducted in the army. The underlying assumption was that those who had displayed martial qualities in the past still retained these virtues. In accordance with the Victorian intellectual currents, the army officers were firm believers in heredity. The perspective of the British historians who operated in colonial India was communal-the Islamic invasion was held to create disorder in the Indian society. The Handbook authors accepted the view that Islamic religious intolerance turned the peaceful Hindu cultivators like the Jats and the Marathas into warriors. Bingley accepted Lane Poole's portrait of Aurangzeb as a villain, whose policies were blamed for causing the alienation of the loyal and martial Rajputs. Bingley compared Aurangzeb's erroneous policy with the Raj's 'foolish' pre 1857 policy, that forced these warriors to rebel. 22

Since the focus of the Handbook authors was on the groups inhabiting particular regions, they consulted regional histories also. While compiling data on the Rajputs of Rajputana, Bingley depended on Tod's Annals of Rajasthan. To grasp the interactions among the various groups, the officers writing the Handbooks also depended on extra-regional histories. Most of these histories were written by the Raj's civilian officers. D. Wright, a doctor, wrote the History of Nepal in 1877 and

Vansittart depended on it. So an intense collaboration between the army and the Raj's civilian apparatus, for gathering data on the Orient, was a characteristic of the last decade of the 19th century. The army probably hated to depend on the civilians. One can infer that to forego this dependence, and also to increase the army's information about the various indigenous communities, the military ordered its officers like Lieutenant F.G. Cardew to start writing histories of British India.23

Though European writings were more readily accessible, the writers of the Handbooks did not depend only on Occidental sources to understand the Orient. Vansittart used Sarat Chandra Das' account of his journey to Lhasa and central Tibet, published in 1901, for information about the tribes of eastern Nepal. Both the Hindu and the Muslim authors were utilized. The project of translation of various vernacular works received a strong impetus from the army's demand to know more about India. *Tahafat ul Mujahidin* was translated by Rowlandson and used by Pryor. To understand the religious mentality of the 'martial races' like the Sikhs, Bingley depended both on the European writer Newall's *Notes on the Hindu Religion*, and also on an indigenous work like the *Adi Granth*, which was translated by Trump. From the latter, he concluded that Sikhism was a martial religion, and hence its followers were also martial.24

The Handbook writers also spoke to sepoys about the Indian society. The data they acquired was thus filtered through the minds of the colonized. Havildar Purandhoj Limbu of the 2nd Battalion of the 9th Gurkha Rifles aided Vansittart in

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classifying the tribes and clans of eastern Nepal. Jemadar Assaram of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Battalion of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Gurkhas also collected ethnographic data for Vansittart. Besides the Indian officers, the Indian privates also supplied information, which in turn was cross-checked with the information contained in the books written by the Europeans. In 1889, 3 recruits asserted before Vansittart that they belonged to the Jail clan of the Magar tribe. Information about this clan was absent in the books written by the British.\textsuperscript{25}

The Handbook authors also made use of the folk tradition and local proverbs which provided both positive and negative images of the various communities. One proverb which was quoted by Bingley, was as follows

\begin{quote}
The dog and cat, Ranghars and Gujar,
If it were not for these four, you might
sleep with your doors open.\textsuperscript{26}
\end{quote}

Such legends might have created a negative image about the Gujars in the imperial mind. The imperialists came to accept them as dacoits and as a result their recruitment suffered. Among the women of the Jangwara clan of the Jats, this couplet was common:

\begin{quote}
Below is earth, above is Ram
Between the two, fights Dhopu Ram.
\end{quote}

Bingley used this couplet to infer that the Jats were soldier-like. He also accepted the interpretation common in Indian society that the Jats were 'thick-headed fools'. However this fitted well with the assumption of the spokesmen of the Martial Race

\textsuperscript{25} Vansittart, \textit{Gurkhas}, p. 61; idem., \textit{Notes}, pp. I, III.

\textsuperscript{26} Bingley, \textit{Jats and Gujars}, p. 38.
lobby like Major G.F. MacMunn, who emerged after Bingley, that proper soldiers need not be intellectually strong.\textsuperscript{27}

Occasionally the Handbooks' authors accepted indigenous myths and legends about the biological origin of the various groups. Bingley accepted the legend that the Jats were descendants of the Jadu Rajputs. This interpretation was different from that propounded by the European scholars, that the Jats were related to the Scythians.\textsuperscript{28}

The Handbook authors' believed that Indian society was changing, both due to internally generated changes, and the influence of British administration. Bingley had written that the Jats moved into central Punjab about 800 years ago and accepted Sikhism later. This, according to him, was an example of indigenous social dynamics. The officers viewed the British administration also as changing the occupation and culture of a group. After 1857, the Meerut canal irrigation transformed the Gujars from cow raiders into 'peaceful' agriculturists.\textsuperscript{29} This belief that British rule could transform various communities into proper soldier-like materials was consistent with the assumption of the military officers turned ethnologists like Barrow, who functioned before the Handbook project. They were probably trying to absorb the Anti-Martial Race lobby's scheme of social engineering.

Warwick Anderson has shown that the dominant scientific belief in the 19th century West was that some races, due to their sanitation practices and food habits, developed physiological immunities to certain sorts of diseases. Their cultural habits

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 43. The couplet is from pp. 18-19; MacMunn, The Armies, p. 136.

\textsuperscript{28} Bingley, Jats and Gujars, pp. 9-12, 38, 92.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., pp. 46, 48; Bingley, Sikhs, p. 15.
were determined by race. The Handbook authors accepted this ‘scientific’ strand. They further divided Indian ecology to find out which groups fared best in which physical environment.

Some Handbook writers, like the Martial Race ideologues, established a connection between the physical features of the terrain, on the one hand, and the value system, work ethic, occupation and combat capacities of the inhabitants, on the other. Captain R.W. Falcon, who was a recruiting officer in the 4th Sikh Infantry, specialized on the Punjabis. He believed that the physical surroundings influenced the cultural make up of the inhabitants. He pointed out that the characteristics of the Sikhs like hardiness, boldness, independence of spirit etc which made them good warriors, depended not only on the race and religion, but also on the regions which bred them. He continued that hereditary traits interacted with terrain and climate. Moreover, qualities like bravery and obedience varied with region. According to Bingley, a damp riverine climate produced unmartial inhabitants, because the presence of fertile plains and river valleys resulted in bumper crops without effort. The underlying logic was that in the fertile areas, agriculture was not laborious. So the people became easygoing, indolent, and their physique declined. The Handbook writers were convinced that the endurance learned through manual labour was an essential quality of soldiering. In ecological zones like unirrigated plains and hilly regions, the

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31 Roberts, *Forty One Years*, pp. 499, 530, 532, 534; Captain R.W. Falcon, *Handbook on Sikhs for the use of Regimental Officers* (Allahabad, 1896), pp. 61, 65, 68. The view that physical culture shaped the soldiers’ mentality is common among a group of modern historians. One British historian, R. Overy assumes that the Russian soldiers were capable of accepting an enormous amount of stress and strain because the climate and the terrain in which they grew up was harsh. Richard Overy, *Russia’s War* (1997, reprint, London, 1998), p. XVII.
inhabitants were forced to work hard to get frugal meals. So they became inured to hardship, and hence were good material for the army. Bingley warned that the Sikhs inhabiting the fertile doab region of Punjab, known as Doaba Sikhs, were worse than the Malwa Sikhs who were from the infertile cis Sutlej area. The latter, by their sheer labour, had transformed the unirrigated central Punjab into a prosperous area. They had thus acquired the qualities of hardihood and honesty which were necessary for being good troops. So he recommended the enlistment of the Malwa Sikhs. Vansittart demanded that the recruits' families must own their own lands. Bingley was for recruitment of the tillers. He noted that the Jats of the Bikaner desert below Ferozepur tilled the lands of the Rajput zamindars and had the qualities of patience and endurance, the necessary components in the making of warriors. He argued that the small peasants, unlike the rich farmers, were industrious and disciplined. As prosperous peasants like the Jats of northern Rajputana were not interested in joining the colonial war machine, Bingley dubbed them as unmartial.32

The Sikhs were a martial community for the British, who therefore assumed that all the Sikhs ought to be willing to join the Indian Army. But many British officers found that the Sikhs from the agriculturally prosperous area of the Jullundhur doab preferred to remain as farmers rather than following the arduous career of soldiering. Most of the Sikh recruits came from the agrarian deficit area of Beas and the region around Tarn Tarn.33 This contradiction between reality and ideology the imperialist tried to explain through an amalgam of ecological and cultural factors.

32 Bingley, Sikhs, pp. 5, 11, 14-15, 30, 39, 45-46; idem., Jats and Gujars, pp. 14, 28, 42, 97-98; Vansittart, Gurkhas, pp. 82, 91.

33 Memorandum by Norman on the distribution of the armies in India, para 19, 26 Sept. 1872, Notes of a tour by Norman, Nov. 1871, Norman minutes, N.A.I.
The Handbook authors were unable to tap the economically prosperous zones. Some were also against recruiting from the economic deficit zones. In Vansittart’s view, the Terai ecology did not produce enough food for the proper development of the muscles and bones of the inhabitants. So he was against the enlistment of the groups like the Tharus inhabiting that region.\(^{34}\)

Bingley believed that the Jats who inhabited the drier parts of Punjab were healthier than those Jats who came from the damp and swampy areas of the western Gangetic doab. Pryor was for the enlistment of the Moplahs living far away from the coast because they were considered healthier than those Moplahs inhabiting the coast. Pryor claimed that this was because, due to the low water supply in the coastal area of Malabar, the diseases like dropsy and dysentery were very common.\(^ {35}\)

The 19\(^{th}\) century West believed that the consumption of meat was necessary for good health. The Handbook authors constructed a linkage between dietary habits and the martial capabilities. They equated vegetarianism with weakness. Bingley and Nicholls said that only those Brahmins, who ate fowl and goats, were to be recruited. The Raghubansis, a subgroup of the Rajputs, though being small farmers, were not enlisted because they were vegetarian.\(^ {36}\)

Another strand of contemporary medical thinking, which influenced the officers, was that many ‘races’ degenerated due to unsanitary practices and immoral

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\(^ {34}\) Vansittart, *Notes*, pp. 59-60, 116-17.


conduct. Many Handbook authors emphasized the personal hygiene and morality of
the members of the groups concerned. As far as these aspects were concerned,
Bingley and Nicholls concluded that the North Indian Brahmins were a model race.
The officers emphasized that the recruits should enjoy stable family lives, they must
be free from debauchery and their dress ought to be decent. Betham pointed out that
the Deccani Muslims had the habit of going to prostitutes, and so they frequently
suffered from venereal diseases. This factor somewhat obstructed the recruitment of
the Deccani Muslims, because the military saw red where venereal diseases were
concerned, due to their devastating effects on the European troops in India. However
this argument was not carried too far. The Gurkhas were regarded as dirty, but were
enlisted. In general, the Handbook writers felt that those groups which engaged in
outdoor sports had well developed limbs, which aided them in battle. So the officers
were encouraged to popularize hockey and kabbadi among the groups which supplied
military manpower. 37

The Handbook authors linked occupational backgrounds to cultural traits.
They believed that particular sorts of professions gave rise to particular types of
mentalities. Most of the writers accepted that the agriculturists constituted the best
soldierly materials. This belief was common among the Martial Race ideologues too.
However, unlike the Martial Race spokesmen, the Handbook writers were willing to
recruit men from non-agrarian backgrounds due to the demand-supply gap. Bingley
upheld the case of recruitment of the distillers in the army. The Newars and the
Khambus were landowners and cultivators of Nepal, but as they were not interested in

37 Mark Harrison, Public Health in British India: Anglo-Indian Preventive Medicine, 1859-1914
(Cambridge, 1994), pp. 36-49, 60-98; Betham, Marathas and Dekhani Musulmans, pp. 48, 78, 113;
Bingley, Jats and Gujars, pp. 170-71; Vansittart, Gurkhas, p. 49.
soldiering, Vansittart had to look towards communities practicing other occupations, like the Limbus who were *shikaris* (hunters). Martial qualities were believed to be inherited and socially derived. Vansittart believed that the Limbus, being hunters for generations, were acquainted with forests and would prove to be excellent light infantry for fighting in the hilly forest terrain. 38

Men from occupations which demanded very low intellectual skills were generally favoured. This was because the Handbook authors wanted the recruits to be as honest and simple as children. The cultivating groups were favoured because the level of education was very low among them. The Jats were one of the most favoured ‘martial’ groups. Within that community, only the village headmen were literate. The Jats were seen as fools. The members of the Raibdar clan of the Jat community were considered famous for their stupidity and they were intensively enlisted. Among the Moplahs, another potential ‘martial race’, only 1 in 1000 could sign their names. The British probably understood that it was more difficult to control men with education. Bingley and Nicholls were against those Brahmins who were literate, because they feared that they would indulge in intrigues, which would adversely affect the army’s discipline. Only those Brahmins who were illiterate were considered to be engaged in agriculture and were inducted. The Aroras of Punjab were generally contractors and traders. As their occupation was considered to demand too many brains, they were not enlisted. 39


Prosperous professions were dubbed non-military by the Handbook authors, probably because men following such occupations were not interested in joining the military. The members of Agrai tribe in Nepal worked in the mines and were affluent, so Vansittart considered them as unmartial. The Handbook authors were unwilling to recruit from those professions which were looked down by the Indians. After all, the army was the principal coercive apparatus of the Raj. And if the armed personnel lacked prestige in the society, then indirectly the Raj’s prestige would also suffer. Probably for this reason those Deccani Muslims who were shoemakers or dyers, and were looked down on in the Indian society, were not recruited in the army. This was an instance of Indian value systems shaping imperial policy.

Like the Martial Race theorists, the writers of the Handbooks were against enlistment from the cities. Bingley was against inducting men from the urban centres like Mathura and Agra. Why did they believe that the city populace had degenerated? Probably because the urban centres provided job opportunities to the proletariat. Hence the proletariat could afford to shy away from the army. The officers tried to justify this fact, by arguing that such men’s instincts were unmartial. Secondly, officers like Betham felt that the urban populace was disease ridden because its sanitary conditions were horrible. Contemporary medical science, under the influence of the ‘Germ Theory’, accepted that the urban populace was in general diseased. From the end of the 19th century onwards, the British military establishment in the United Kingdom was also convinced that the peasant recruits were hardier than those from

the industrial cities. 41 Probably all these strand of ideas influenced the British military elites in India.

The Handbook authors very strongly emphasized the linkages between the demographic distribution of the communities and the prospect of their recruitment due to the theories of race and to satisfy the quantitative demands of the army. From the Brahmins of north India, Bingley and Nicholls were for enlistment of only the Gaur Brahmins. Among them, only the Kanhoujiyas and Saraswat clans were allowed to join the army, because they practiced agriculture. Their recruiting ground was demarcated as the area around the Yamuna, Pilibhit, Chambal and Mathura. The recruiting base of the Ahirs was very narrow. Bingley only wanted the Jadubans Ahirs from Gurgaon district in the army. 42

Falcon pointed out that the Sikhs were to be recruited only from those districts of Punjab where they constituted a majority. He warned that those Sikhs who were a minority in certain districts were racially rotten. This was because they were actually immigrants and married unmartial groups after settling down. So the immigrant Sikhs' racial purity was destroyed. Hence they ought to be shunned in the army. Falcon provided a list of the Sikh majority areas like Tarn Tarn tehsil in Amritsar,


42 Major A.H. Bingley, Caste Handbooks for the Indian Army: Jats, Gujars and Ahirs (Calcutta, 1904), pp. 22-29, 30-31, 35; Bingley and Nicholls, Brahmins, pp. 22-29, 30-31, 35.
from where recruitment ought to proceed, and Sikh minority areas like Sharakpur tehsil in Lahore district, which ought to be avoided.\(^{43}\)

Punjab was the most important recruiting ground for the Raj. So Bingley accumulated demographic data on that region. He calculated that the land of the 5 rivers supported 1000000 Jat Sikhs, 1000000 Brahmins and 1,500,000 Rajputs. Of the latter two groups, only 7,600 and 20,000 had accepted Sikhism. Then there were 447000 Khatris but only 52,000 among them were Sikhs. As the Brahmin, Rajput and the Khatri Sikhs were minorities in Punjab and the Jat Sikhs were the majority, in accordance with Falcon’s dictum, only the Jat Sikhs were enlisted. To aid the regiments in recruiting, the male population of each district was calculated. Bingley found that Patiala and Ferozepur were most densely populated with Sikhs. The former had 250,000 male Sikhs in 1891.\(^{44}\)

III
Effects

What was the impact of this discourse by the Handbook authors on the Indian Army’s recruitment policy? In the first decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century the imperialists attempted to balance the various Hindu and Muslim groups within the regiments. It seems that this was the effect of the Handbook authors’ communal interpretation of Indian history, which like an oil slick spread outwards, from the officers authoring the Handbooks to the army in general. At the micro level, the Madrassis who were dubbed unmartial were discharged and the favourite ‘martial’ races from northwest India filled their

\(^{43}\) Falcon, \textit{Handbook on Sikhs}, pp. 61, 69.

In 1902, the 7th, 9th, and the 14th Madras Infantry regiments were replaced with the Punjabi Muslims and the Sikhs. Only the Jat Sikhs who were engaged in agriculture were enlisted, presumably in accordance with the dictum of Falcon and Bingley. Bingley did not favour the north Indian Rajputs much. Probably for this reason, in the beginning of the 20th century, the axe fell on them. The 12th Bengal Infantry Regiment was ordered to replace its Rajput personnel from north India with Hindu Jats and Lobana Sikhs. The Hyderabad Contingent’s cavalry was ordered to recruit the Deccani Muslims. The Deccani Muslims came into prominence because Betham spearheaded their cause.

All these had their effects at the macro level. Between 1885 and 1912, as the Indian Army expanded from 130,000 to 158,000 men, the groups favoured by the Handbook writers increased their share significantly. The Jats were virtually absent in the army in the 1880s. After Bingley sponsored their cause, they numbered 9,670 men just before the First World War. From table 7 it is evident that as the imperial demand for the Gurkhas increased, along with the Magars and the Gurungs, the eastern tribes from Nepal were also inducted in larger numbers. The share of the tribes of eastern Nepal in the overall Gurkha contingent absorbed from Nepal increased with time. In 1890-91, their share was only 12.5%, and in 1892-93 it rose to 30.1%. By 1895, the eastern Nepali tribes’ share jumped to 44.1%. We must

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46 Bingley, Rajputs, Appendix A and B, p. 29; G.O. nos. 79, 236, 30 Jan. 1903, 27 March 1903.


48 Vansittart, Notes, pp. 7-8. See also table 7.
remember that Vansittart in the later editions of his book, also included the tribes from eastern Nepal within his construct of the Gurkhas.

The Handbook authors made the Martial Race theory more complex. In Roberts' paradigm, which evolved in the late 19th century, the Jats were not regarded as a martial group. But Bingley wrote a monograph on the Jats. Roberts' supporters like Goodenough and Dalton then approved of their recruitment, but only from northwest India. Nevertheless Betham upheld the cause of the Marathas inhabiting the area south of the Vindhyas. MacMunn, an early 20th century votary of the Martial Race concept, accepted the Jats and the Marathas as martial communities. \(^{49}\) Again Roberts was not preoccupied with the connection between 'warrior' instinct and deitary norms. After Bingley and Nicholls propounded this linkage, Goodenough and Dalton also came to accept it. \(^{50}\) So the Handbook authors were able to introduce significant policy shifts in the recruitment programme.


\(^{50}\) See page 29.
Table 7: Volume-cum-Region-wise Recruitment of the Gurkhas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Central Nepal</th>
<th>Total Numbers</th>
<th>Total Numbers of Enlisted</th>
<th>Grand Total Nepal Recruited from Eastern Nepal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Magars</td>
<td>Sunwars, Limbus and Central Rais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884-85</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886-87</td>
<td>1064</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>1497</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887-88</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>1297</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-89</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889-90</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-91</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>1121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

One of the principal proponents of the Martial Race ideology, the Handbook authors were highly influenced by contemporary Western intellectual trends. However, the construction of the discourse on the Orient was not a one way process. The fables and folk traditions of the subcontinent, along with its Indian agents, played their parts in the construction of this hegemonic discourse. Hence the British Indian Army and the indigenous society played a dialectical game in the creation of the stereotypes about the various warrior groups. Mark Harrison’s argument that findings in the colonies strengthened the racial biological thinking in the metropole may be applicable in the case of Indian Army’s ethnographic project. Victorian eugenics, medical geography, phrenology and anthropometry influenced the military ethnologists in India. The latter’s findings probably further strengthened the imperial pseudo-sciences.

Although the military played a vital role in ruling India, historians have neglected the army’s images about the Indian society. As is evident from this essay, the army’s thought process had many shades which could not be accommodated within the three tier ideological structure of the Raj as chalked out by Eric Stokes. The Handbook project was not a part of Orientalism, Evangelicalism or Utilitarianism. Edward Said has opened our eyes to the imperial construction of Orientalism. But as far as India was concerned, the scholars miss out the army’s contribution in the creation of this discourse and the various complexities of Military Orientalism. Caplan has pointed out that the imperial discourse on the Gurkhas


constituted a different sort of Orientalism from that constructed by Said or Ronald Inden.\textsuperscript{53} From the Handbooks, we have seen that the imperial theorization on the other 'martial' groups like the Sikhs and the Jats differed a lot from their discourse on the Gurkhas. Hence the army's view of the Orient was not an undifferentiated one.

The aim of the military's ethnographic discourse was different from that carried out by the colonial government. The latter project laid emphasis on the groups whom the colonial government wanted to make powerless.\textsuperscript{54} But the army's discourse focused on those who were considered socially powerful, and hence ought to be recruited in the army. However, in the long run, the British programme to chalk out the racial landscape of the subcontinent proved to be a hindrance. The military establishment needed to interpret the social and demographic data to operate in an alien landscape. The Handbook authors were small men lost in the Indian society. Their procedure was self-defeating because the logic behind their categorization of the inhabitants of South Asia was that each group had a particular turn of mind and inner qualities which they were predisposed to exhibit. They believed in the characteristics of their favoured communities. But all their achievements were not in vain. The corpus of knowledge about the Indians at the colonial state's disposal registered a quantum jump. But the very selectivity about enlistment which the Handbook authors displayed proved to be a great weakness. The social and territorial bases of recruitment could not be really broad based though some officers belonging to the Anti-Martial Race lobby felt the need for them to be, in case mass mobilization


became necessary during an attritional war. The army became so obsessed with their 'martial' groups that recruitment became unbalanced. The force became dependent on only a few communities hailing from a very narrow tract of India. Alarm bells were ringing in 1913 over the issue of overdependence on the Punjabis. But by then it was too late. The First World War intervened and blood, death and disaster overwhelmed the Raj.
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.\(^4\) 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

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.5

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 18th 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 18th 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 19th 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.6

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

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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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 seer of Wheat = Rs 1</td>
<td>Wheat or Rice, 3 Seer of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pulse, 30 Chattaks of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ghee and 10 Chattaks of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Salt every month.</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 9: Pay of Regular Infantry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Amount Per Month</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1860s 1870s 1912</td>
<td></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 Rs 100</td>
<td></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 Rs 30</td>
<td></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 Rs 13</td>
<td>In 1860, at Pegu a labourer earned Rs 9 per month (but his job was irregular).</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>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1860s</td>
<td>1890s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risaldar</td>
<td>Rs 150</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resaidar</td>
<td>Rs 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naib Resaidar</td>
<td>Rs 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jemadar</td>
<td>Rs 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dufadar</td>
<td>Rs 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naib Dufadar</td>
<td>Rs 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nishanburdar</td>
<td>Rs 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpeter</td>
<td>Rs 24-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sowar</td>
<td>Rs 25</td>
<td>Rs 31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 19th 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 then 20 years of service were awarded pensions plus gratuity equivalent to 6 months' pay.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{15} For signal service against the mutineers of 1857, Mowla Buksh of

\textsuperscript{14} Roll of the men of 13th Punjab Infantry who appeared before the invaliding committee at Meerut, 20 May 1861, Lieutenant T.H. Scott Commanding late 13th Punjab Infantry to the Assistant Adjutant General, Calcutta, Progs. nos. 104, 187, 10 July 1861, 15 July 1861, M.D.P. Oct. 1861.

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. 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.

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.

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, 38, 39, June 1861, July 1861, Sept. 1861, 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.\textsuperscript{21} An allowance was provided to the soldiers, for maintaining their uniforms.\textsuperscript{22}

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.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21} Tallett, \textit{War and Society}, p. 120; S.N. Sen, \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Army Regulations, India}, vol. 2, \textit{Regulations and Orders for the Army} (Calcutta, 1913), p.112.

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 1dresser.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

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.

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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. For honouring regimental pride, the 2nd Gurkha Rifles, which participated in the successful Kabul-Kandahar march, was awarded bronze stars in February 1882. 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.

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


30 Shakespear, Sirmoor Rifles, p. 104.

31 Keegan, History of Warfare, p. XVI.
to put the letters IOM beside their names. 32

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.33

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.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.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

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.

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. 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

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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.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.  

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. This kept the British-Indian soldiers well-disciplined and tactically effective. During emergencies, when local food


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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{41} Their Home Army in Britain, which started building barracks from the 17\textsuperscript{th} 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

\textsuperscript{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.

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

\textsuperscript{44} Shakespear, \textit{Strmoo 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, 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 Ky1wara, Atkinson, to the Adjutant General, Fort William, Progs. nos. 618-19, 4 Jan. 1861, 15 March 1861, M.D.P. March 1861.

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

\textsuperscript{47} Anon, History of the 1\textsuperscript{st} 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. 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. 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. 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 1st Punjab Cavalry about 23 persons got this order, 16 of whom were officers. 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

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

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

52 Wilson, Madras Cavalry, p.66.

53 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.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.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

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.

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. This 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

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


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.\textsuperscript{59}

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 \textit{chulás} (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.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{60} Major G. Casserly, \textit{Life in an Indian Outpost} (London, n.d.), p.23; Abstract return of the 19\textsuperscript{th} Punjab Infantry Regiment, signed Capt. J. Doran, Commandant, Barakpore, Progs. no. 136, 1 Dec. 1859, M.D.P.
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.\textsuperscript{61} In the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the hutting allowance for each regiment cost the army Rs 3,116.\textsuperscript{62} 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 March 1860, Commissariat department, office of the Controller of Military Finance, signed Lieutenant Colonel T. McGown, Controller of Military Finance, Fort Saint George, Progs. no. 329, 7 May 1861, M.D.P. Oct. 1861.


\textsuperscript{62} 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

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. 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 kuccba 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). Hospitals with low roofs were remade. Under the new plans, some

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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.

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

69 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.

70 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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 13\textsuperscript{b} Punjab Infantry who appeared before the invaliding committee, Meerut, Progs. no. 103, 20 May 1861, M.D.P. Oct. 1861.

\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{77} I will argue that the British attempt to introduce European-style army administration was the principal force behind the

\textsuperscript{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.  

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 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. 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. 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

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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.

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.

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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.
Calcutta and Agra. 

V

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

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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.


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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

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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

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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.\textsuperscript{92}

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.\textsuperscript{93}

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

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

\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{94}

The soldiers reacted to the malfunctioning of the welfare bureaucracy. Mir Jafir, the late commandant of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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,

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\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{95} Mir Jafir, to Napier, Progs. nos.449-50, M.D.P. Oct. 1861.

\textsuperscript{96} General George Chesney, \textit{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

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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.