INTRODUCTION

The present work is an attempt to study the role of the European adventurers in various spheres of activities in north India during the period from 1760s onwards till the early years of the nineteenth century. It deals with their presence in military, political, commercial and social world of the north Indian region and tries to bring out the impact that their presence had in these fields. Within these broad categories, the present work tries to address some of the issues such as what led to the European adventurers migration to north India, how their presence influenced the military organization of the local states, how they created new channels of political diplomacy, how they influenced the transformation of urban landscape or affected the local networks of trade, and how they changed the social fabric of the region and created space of foreigners in the local milieu.

The reason for choosing this period for the study is that one observes the large-scale presence of the European adventurers in north India only during this period, a phenomenon which started in the early years of 1760s and continued until their defeat at the hands of the English in 1803.

The presence of the European adventurers in north India has to be seen in the backdrop of the existing political conditions which facilitated their entry into the region. Apart from this, the declining fortunes of the Compagnie des Indes (the French East India Company) was another factor that pushed these adventurers to look for employment opportunities in this part of India.

The rise of various regional states in the wake of the decline of the Mughal Empire and internecine warfare among them for political and territorial aggrandizement had
created conditions for the employment of the European adventurers in these states. Their employment was further facilitated due to the fact that the north Indian rulers were not completely ignorant of the western military methods that were being effectively used by the company forces in their wars in India. The example of the Nawab of Awadh Shuja-ud-daula is most relevant in this regard who himself had approached the adventurers much before the time of the battle of Buxar. In addition to it, the outcome of the battles of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) further established the supremacy of western methods of warfare in the eyes of the north Indian rulers. Therefore, one finds that from this time onwards each local ruler tried to entice the support of the European experts to strengthen his military power. Their main aim was to establish their supremacy over their rivals. The Nawab of Awadh Shuja-ud-daula was a pioneer in this regard who made vigorous attempts to employ the European adventurers in his service. The evidence show that not only Awadh, the initiative was also taken by the Rohelas who made the employment of the European adventurers as the state’s policy during this period. Later, the Jats and the Mughals also pursued similar policies to improve the military standards of their armies with the help of these adventurers. Thus, it was ‘local initiative’ that attracted European adventurers to north India.

The other factors that were responsible for the European adventurers’ northward movement were the decline in the power of the French company in the early decades of the second half of the eighteenth century and harassing working conditions in the Company army. The failure of the French company in the Seven Years’ War and their defeat at the hands of the English company brought a large number of experienced
and capable Frenchmen to north India.¹ The difficult working conditions in the Companies' armies for common soldiers were other important factors that led to large desertions from the Company service. For instance, René Madec had worked in the army of the English company after being imprisoned by them before joining the Nawab of Awadh. By his own admission, who had worked both in the French and the English companies, the mistreatment of the common soldiers in the Companies' armies were other factors that pushed the adventurers to north Indian states. Thus, it was the combination of 'local initiative' of the Indian rulers and declining fortunes of the French company that led to such a heavy migration of the European adventurers to the north Indian region.

Most of these European adventurers who came to north India during this period were French. It was largely due to the fact that contrary to the English company, the French company had not put any restrictions on its soldiers from joining of Indian service. As a result, many Frenchmen left the Company service and joined the Indian states. Some of the most famous European adventurers who joined the 'Indian' service in north India during the period under study were Jean-Baptiste Gentil, René Madec, Sombre, Modave, Canaple, Antoine Polier, Delamarr, De Boigne, and Perron.

The European adventurers' employment in Indian states led to crucial changes in various spheres of action. But the most important change that was brought about by

¹ The Seven Years' War that French company fought with the English proved disastrous for France. They lost their settlements not only in Bengal but also all of their settlements in coastal India. Chandernagore was captured in March 1757. Pondicherry was captured on 16th January 1761. Karikal had already been captured and Mahé was also lost during the war. In fact, the war proved to be so disastrous for France that the French government was forced to seek a peace treaty with the English. The Treaty of Paris signed on 10th February 1763 ended the war but French power was considerably liquidated. The outcome of these wars resulted in either unemployment of many soldiers or their imprisonment. It were these conditions that led many French soldiers to join the service of Indian rulers. S. P. Sen, The French in India, 1763-1816, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1971, pp. 30-34.
them was in the Indian military system. They played an important role in its transformation from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’. That is, the traditional military system which was based on ‘sword-wielding cavalry’ was changed to the infantry and artillery-based system. Besides this, organization and discipline were formed the most important features of this new army. The transition in the indigenous military system from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ was one of the most important changes of this period.

René Madec, Sombre, and Gentil were the early adventurers who introduced European methods of warfare in Indian forces, and thus, led to military transition. Employed by various Indian states, the early adventurers raised and trained Indian corps on modern system of warfare. At the same time they also increased the strength of their contingents by raising and training Indian soldiers, indicating the dissemination of western military knowledge to the native soldiers. The knowledge of western military science was imparted to Indian soldiers through various training programs and routine drill which included disciplined movement of corps, training to handle artillery, and effective use of hollow square tactics etc. As it would be seen in

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3 Both Sombre and Madec increased the strength of their contingent by recruiting Indian soldiers. When Sombre joined the Awadh state he had only two regiments but he soon raised it to five. Similarly Madec within a short span of time recruited more Indians in his service when he joined the Rohelas. He raised the strength of his forces from 400 to 800 indicating that many native soldiers began to be trained in new art of war. Later in the service of the Jats and the Mughals their armies registered significant growth in the numbers of native soldiers. Lester Hutchinson, *European Freebooters in Moghul India*, Asia Publishing House, 1964, Bombay, p. 47; *Mémoire de Madec (Memoir of Madec)*, French Nouvelle Acquisition, Département des Manuscrits, 9368 (Microfilm), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, pp. 44, 47.
the first two chapters, these military techniques proved extremely effective in the wars against the unorganized indigenous forces relying on cavalry.4

Whereas the early adventurers led to transition in Indian military culture, the later adventurers who joined ‘Indian’ service in the last two decades of the century brought complete transformation in it. The later adventurers namely De Boigne and Perron raised five fully trained and disciplined Europeanized brigades, and thus, brought ‘revolution’ in Indian military system. It was revolution in the sense that towards the end of the century change was confined not merely to some trained regiments commanded by Europeans as the general perception had existed, but the Indian forces were transformed into disciplined and organized full-fledged brigades. Besides this, radical changes were introduced in the use of firearms which had remained unchanged till the middle of the eighteenth century.5 Infantry and artillery were formed the mainstay of the army, and cavalry which had hitherto been a major line of strike was turned into a subsidiary unit. Profuse use of western arms and ammunitions was promoted. A number of arsenals and foundries were built during this period where western arms and ammunitions were manufactured on a large-scale. The soldiers of the brigades were armed with latest weapons in use such as muskets, matchlocks,

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5 For whole of the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth century the nature of firearms used in the Mughal armies had remained unchanged. But the second half of the eighteenth century witnessed large-scale use of new weapons and firearms which otherwise were the characteristic features of European armies. Iqtidar Alam Khan, *Gunpowder and Firearms: Warfare in Medieval India*, OUP, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 103-104.
bayonets etc. In addition to it, the brigades received fully organized military training in European tactics such as column formation during operations, formation of defensive or offensive 'hollow square' according to the situation on the battlefield, and extensive use of flint-matchlocks. These innovative military tactics markedly enhanced the effectiveness of the new armed forces. The military successes of the Europeanized brigades of De Boigne against the Rajput's cavalry forces, particularly in the battle of Patan and Merta, were a glaring testimony of the effectiveness of European military tactics. Thus, what was started by the early adventurers in the initial stages of their presence reached its culmination in the early years of the nineteenth century under the later adventurers.

Apart from their role in the militarization of Indian army, the European adventurers also had a significant presence in the political, commercial, and social world of the region. As per the available sources scattered in various libraries and archives we find that their role in domains other than the military one was no less important. But so far, they have largely been presented only within the framework of their military career, and their presence in other fields has been ignored. The reason for such inadequacies is that most of the existing works are chiefly based on English sources which had focused only the military aspect of the adventurers' presence. The other plausible reason is that most of the adventurers who came to north India during this period were French; therefore, it was but natural for the English historians to marginalize their presence through such restricted depictions. The following section deals with the important existing works and discusses how they are myopic in their approach.

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Historiographical Trends

Most of the existing works on the theme have dealt with the military aspect of the European adventurers' career. But even there, one sees not only erroneous depictions of these adventurers but one also finds apparent signs of biasness. In other words, most of the existing works of the scholars on the theme have treated the European adventurer’s presence in the region in a derogatory manner. Among modern historians, Lester Hutchinson and Shelford Bidwell, who worked exclusively on the adventurers, presented them with despised categorizations such as ‘mercenaries’, ‘freebooters’ or ‘swords for hire’. That they had gone overboard in such categorizations was evident from the fact that they even gave such titles to their works. Lester Hutchinson in his book *European Freebooters in Moghul India* argued that in the wake of declining Mughal power the sole purpose of these ‘freebooters’ was to make fortunes through plunder.⁷ Without making any distinction, he included Sombre, George Thomas, and De Boigne within the category of ‘freebooters’. De Boigne, however, does not really fit in the ‘freebooters’ frame as not only did he have a stable career under the Maratha leader Mahadji Sindhia but he had also strictly ordered his brigades not to loot and plunder during wars. There are many more such weaknesses in Hutchinson’s work due to his limited source base. As his work was largely based on a few English works it was not only narrow in its approach as it saw the adventurers’ presence solely from the military angle but was also inadequate in its dealing with the adventurers who were present in the Mughal Empire during this period. That is, he places Sombre and De Boigne in the same frame whereas as it would be seen in the first two chapters that they had belonged to different phases and their role in the military mutation in the region was also different.

⁷ Lester Hutchinson, *op. cit.*
Shelford Bidwell in his book *Swords for Hire*, as the title suggests, also concentrated only on the military career of the adventurers. He described them as European mercenaries and argued that they were unreliable elements who deserted their masters when they were needed the most. Regarding the early adventurers, Bidwell argued that as they were all French they were on the 'military mission' to India. But he soon contradicted himself by saying that these men fought for anyone who paid them, thus, liquidating his own argument that they were on a 'military mission'. Apart from such skewed arguments, Bidwell further said that the armies led by these Europeans were no match to that of the British one. He also argued that the British attached little importance to these adventurers in northern India and were not affected by their presence.

S. P. Sen, who mainly focused on French company's history, gave little space to the adventurers in northern India in his work *The French in India*. He argued that their activities were of no political importance. Therefore it was unnecessary to describe them in detail. Apart from that, falling in league with other scholars, he stated that the French adventurers’ presence was of no historical importance as their only aim was to make huge fortunes and retire to Europe to enjoy their enormous wealth. Although Sen has briefly dealt with some of these personages in his section on various diplomatic missions to India, however, it reveals some factual errors. Another reason for such a biased presentation by Sen was that he concentrated only on the French activities in southern India and the French presence in the north did not form part of his work.

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9 S. P. Sen, *op. cit.*
For C. Grey who wrote *European adventurers of Northern India of 1785 to 1849* these adventurers were négligé. His focus was only on the military officers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He portrayed these adventurers in a derogatory manner by unreasonably calling one of them as scoundrel and the other as ex-pirate.\(^{10}\)

G. B. Malleson in his work *French Struggles in India* devoted a considerable section to the foreign adventurers in India. But as he took into account the adventurers present both in north and south India, his work could not go beyond from merely becoming a source for important information on some of these adventurers. Regarding the adventurers in north India, he largely focused on De Boigne and called others as non-descript ‘wretches’.\(^{11}\) Taking into consideration only the military aspect of their presence, he argued that the military venture of the adventurers was guided by their ‘secret views’ to re-establish French power in India vis-à-vis that of the English.\(^{12}\) He wrote that De Boigne’s master Mahadji Sindhia had nurtured dreams of liquidating the power of the English with the help of the French forces. But it was his sudden death that led to the collapse of such dreams. Contrary to what Malleson says, it would be seen in the second chapter that De Boigne had joined Mahadji Sindhia’s service only on the condition that he would never be forced to fight against the English.

Herbert Compton who wrote *A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan from 1784 to 1803* was no less different in his approach

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\(^{10}\) C. Grey called Sombre a scoundrel and Madec an ex-pirate without giving any reason or evidence in this regard. C. Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India of 1785 to 1849*, Lahore, First Published 1929, Reprint 1993, pp. 6-7.

\(^{11}\) G. B. Malleson, *op. cit.*, pp. 173, 229.

from the above mentioned scholars.\textsuperscript{13} As the title suggests, military activities of these adventurers remained his only focus. He focused on the adventurers of the last two decades of the eighteenth century and their military participation. Despite presenting the military aspect of their presence in the region, he only dealt with their presence in various battles and then their final disappearance from Indian scene. He ignored to study their military presence with a view to present its impact on Indian military system. In broad terms, Compton bound these personages within the limit of military adventurers.

From the foregoing discussion it is abundantly clear that these works are not only imbued with prejudicial feelings but are also narrow in their approach. These inadequacies were highlighted in recent times by the scholars like Rosie Llewellyn-Jones and Jean Marie Lafont who through their meticulous works advocated the adoption of a holistic approach by recording the adventurers’ presence in north India in different perspectives. In addition to it, they also questioned many long-held theoretical constructs. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones through her work \textit{A Very Ingenious Man: Claude Martin in Early Colonial India}, highlighted the multi-dimensional presence of Claude Martin.\textsuperscript{14} She showed the variegated role played by Claude Martin in the capacity of military officer, architect, surveyor, merchant-entrepreneur, and self-practicing doctor in Awadh. Although not exactly on the adventurers, the book provides important information on the commercial and social presence of the adventurers who were Claude Martin’s close friends. She also questioned the pejorative portrayal of the adventurers by historians by arguing that the propagation of

\textsuperscript{13} Herbert Compton, \textit{A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan from 1784 to 1803}, London, 1892.

\textsuperscript{14} Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, \textit{A Very Ingenious Man Claude Martin: In Early Colonial India}, OUP, Delhi, 1992.
'get-rich-quick adventurers' type idea was in fact the work of the English company. She also argued that there was more to the personalities of these adventurers than just their military career. Thus, Rosie Jones' work provides scope for the study of adventurers' presence from various other angles.15

Jean Marie Lafont through his works *Indika: Essays in Indo-French Relations* and *Chitra* opened up new dimensions of the French adventurers' presence in his research.16 Through his articles 'The Quest for Indian Manuscripts by the French in the Eighteenth Century', 'Company Paintings or Faringhee Paintings' and 'Benoit de Boigne in Hindustan', he questioned the validity of stereotypical presentation of the adventurers as 'mercenaries' or 'freebooters' and argued for their multi-faceted presence. In the article 'The Quest for Indian Manuscripts by the French in the Eighteenth Century' he dealt with the intellectual side of the adventurers' personality and their growing passion for the collection of Indian manuscripts and texts. He argued that their intellectual pursuits led to their attachment to India with increased appreciation and admiration once they acquired greater knowledge of the Indian culture and civilization. In his article 'Company paintings or Firinghee paintings', Lafont dealt with the adventurers' role in the birth of a new school of painting known as 'Firinghee' school. Arguing against the general tendency of the scholars to consider Firinghee and Company paintings as one, he stated that Firinghee School emerged in its most perfect manifestation under Gentil in Faizabad in the late eighteenth century. This was different from the company paintings which became popular in the nineteenth century. By using French sources, Lafont showed that the

adventurers still had many unexplored facets to their personalities than only the much emphasized military one. Lafont’s work is, however, more in the nature of throwing valuable light on the possibility of research on various facets of the adventurers for which he provided strong evidence.\textsuperscript{17}

The latest book by Jean Marie Lafont titled \textit{The French & Delhi, Agra, Aligarh and Sardhana} further harps on multiple roles of these adventurers. It provides some interesting information on the activities of these adventurers which is useful for concretizing the arguments. As the book came out very recently, I have not been able to read whole of the book; but it is an important work, and its indiscriminate presentation of facts in a lucid manner is matchless.\textsuperscript{18}

A survey of the existing literature shows that most of the works have given biased accounts of the adventurers’ presence in the region. A major reason for this trend was that most of these works were based on the English sources and this limitation greatly restricted the scope of their work. For instance, Hutchinson and Bidwell’s treatment of the French adventurers was largely based on the English sources which resulted in certain lacunae, misinterpretations, and factual errors in their work. Although S. P. Sen used French sources for his work, yet his work appears to be more on the French company’s history. It has resulted in some sweeping generalizations with undertones that the French adventurers were inconsequential, money-minded lot.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Jean Marie Lafont, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{18} Jean Marie Lafont, \textit{The French & Delhi, Agra, Aligarh and Sardhana}, India Research Press, New Delhi, 2010.

\textsuperscript{19} S. P. Sen, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 539, 545, 546.
A Note on the Nature of Sources

The attempt of the present work is to study the European adventurers’ presence in north India in the light of available unexplored and untapped contemporary French sources scattered in various libraries and archives along with the existing English ones. In most of the available works the French sources have scarcely been used which has been a major factor in the one-sided portrayal of these adventurers. The contemporary French sources provide huge corpus of material on various facets of the adventurers’ presence and help in bring out new information on them. Apart from the French sources, some primary English sources also provide valuable information on these personalities.

The French sources used in the present work were collected from various libraries and archives located in New Delhi and France. In Delhi, some of these sources are available in the CSH French Embassy library, FIRC French Embassy library, Central Secretariat library, ICHR library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, and most importantly in the National Archives. In France, the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris and CAOM archives in Aix-en-Provence further provided important material. Some of the letters of Gentil, Montigny, Chevalier, and memoirs of Law de Lauriston and Gentil which were not available in the National Archives were available in the French library and the archives.

The French sources used in the present work can broadly be classified into travel accounts, memoirs, and letters written by various personalities during the period under study.

Comte de Modave’s travel account forms a major contemporary French source for this work. Modave who travelled to north India from 1773 to 1776 gave a vivid
account of the political and military conditions prevailing in north India during that
time. As he himself was present in various theatres of action, his work not only
provides first-hand information on various issues but also acts as ultimate source for
authentication. His information on the political and military activities of the French
adventurers in Awadh under the leadership of Gentil and his assessment of their
military standing has been of immense help in reconstructing the history of the French
adventurers’ involvement in the politics of Awadh. Modave’s information on Sombre
and Madec and the developments that were taking place in Awadh during the time of
negotiations after the battle of Buxar, have been of great help in refuting various
hitherto supported erroneous constructs and propagations. Apart from writing about
the military and political activities of the adventurers, Modave’s account also come as
a valuable source on the English company’s political intrigues to have the adventurers
expelled from north India.

Modave’s work has also been useful in constructing the Mughal Emperor’s response
to Madec’s efforts in the political diplomacy for the military alliance between the
Mughals and the French. The letter written by the Mughal Emperor to the King of
France provides invaluable information on the Emperor’s proposal to the French
government for the Thatta project and Madec’s role in the Mughal politics.

Memoirs of Gentil, Madec, and Dieu serve as another set of primary source for our
work. Apart from informing about the political conditions of north Indian powers,
these sources reveal valuable information about these personages also. For instance,
Gentil’s memoir comes up as a valuable source for knowing the politico-military
developments in Awadh in the post-Buxar phase. It throws light on the Nawab Shuja-
ud-daula’s efforts to create a Europeanized army and his ambition to free himself
from the English control. The information provided in the memoir also helps us in
establishing the Nawab’s preference for the French and his unstinted support to them by eluding the English demands to expel them and by paying high salaries to them.

Memoir of Madec comes up as the most authentic source on his ‘Indian’ career. It has helped us in reformulating and changing various long-held notions about the adventurers’ career. For instance, that the adventurers were also deeply concerned with the victory and defeats of their masters becomes evident from Madec’s memoir. Apart from that, the memoir also helped in refuting the charges that he was a deserter, for Madec wrote that the Nawab himself advised him to seek job in the interior of Hindustan. The Memoir of Monsieur Dieu provides copious information on the political condition in the heartland of Hindustan and on the increasing military strength of the French adventurers in Hindustan. As these memoirs were written by the adventurers themselves, they account for the most authentic information on their activities and on the changes taking place around them.

Letters written by the French adventurers and Chevalier who was the Governor of Chandernagore forms another category of primary source. Letters of Chevalier and Madec, in particular, shed light on a completely new dimension of Madec’s presence in the Mughal politics. These letters present Madec as a political negotiator who made diplomatic efforts for the formation of alliance between the Mughals and the French government. The correspondence between Chevalier and him reveal about the involvement of many other French adventurers as well who attempted for the military alliance. Available in the form of microfilms in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, and Aix-en-Provence archives in France, these letters form an important source not only for bringing forth a relatively less known aspect of their life in India, but also for providing rich information on new political diplomatic channels opened by them and its impact on the politics of the region.
The Persian letters of Polier and Martin are other valuable set of sources that fall under this genre. Written to a wide range of people and dealing with diverse issues, these letters serve as a major source of information on the economic activities of Polier and De Boigne and some other adventurers. For instance, Polier's letters to his agents and trading partners provide exhaustive information on his trading vocation. The letters of Martin provide significant information on the trading activities of De Boigne, and Perron as these men had business partnership with Martin. These epistolary sources provide a major breakthrough for research on the commercial venture of the adventurers and its impact on the economic map of the region.

Guy Deleury's work titled as *Les Indes Florissantes* is an exhaustive primary source. Being a compendium of the works of various contemporary Frenchmen, it covers a wide range of themes. Apart from dealing with politics and society, it also includes articles on religion, manners and customs, and philosophy. The information provided in the book is particularly helpful to know about the social world of the adventurers and their impact on Indian society.

Apart from the above mentioned French primary sources, the English accounts form another group of sources for the work. These English sources help us in understanding...
the differing perceptions about the adventurers that were in existence during the period and in putting the things in proper perspective.

Travel accounts form one set of sources that enrich our knowledge about these adventurers. George Forster and William Hodges' travelogues provide crucial information about various developments in Awadh during this period. Forster, in particular, gives important information about Gentil and the Nawab's growing resistance to the English attempts to dominate Awadh in the post-Buxar period. The accounts of Bishop Heber and Victor Jacquemont reveal about the British attitude towards Indians and thus help us in understanding the differences in the adventurers and the British attitudes towards the natives.

Apart from the travelogues, the memoirs of Wendel, James Skinner, and John Malcolm supply varying nature of information. Written in different periods of time, these memoirs serve as the storehouse of information on political, military and social conditions of north India during the period under study. Wendel's memoir, written in 1768 on the origin and growth of Jat power in Hindustan, is an authentic account on the rise of Jats in the eighteenth century and political affairs of north India during the period. It is particularly important for our work for it provides information on Madec and Sombre's military presence in the Jat state and changes brought by them in the military culture there. The memoir of James Skinner deals with military adventurers of the later phase. It gives useful information on General Sombre and his wife Begum Sombre, De Boigne, and Perron. John Malcolm's memoir further enriches our knowledge about De Boigne and his expansion and consolidation of European military culture in north India.

Most of the existing works have scarcely used the above mentioned sources. They based their studies only on a select few English writings which were easily available.
But these writing were not only biased in their approach, they were also inadequate. The use of French sources and some untapped memoirs in English has not only helped in reformulating various long-held notions about the adventurers and reconstruction of their history from new perspectives but they also broaden our understanding about the historical developments that took place during this period and the role of the European adventurers in it.

Brief Detail about the Chapters

The present work which is divided in five chapters is a study of the multi-dimensional character of the European adventurers’ presence in the politics of north India in the period from 1760s onwards till the early years of the nineteenth century. As it studies their presence in various thematic frames, hence, it does not follow the ‘strict chronological frame’.

The present work focuses on the adventurers’ activities in north India. The geographical stretch defined for this work within north India ranges from the Awadh state in the east to the eastern Punjab in the west. Whereas the river Narmada forms the boundary in the south, the foothills of Himalayas act as the northern stretch of north India chosen for this work. In other words, the region taken into account is essentially the upper India including the Awadh state where the adventurers were most active in the second half of the eighteenth century. Therefore, while referring to the region, the words such as upper India, Hindustan, or north India have been liberally used. Although Hindustan as a region was defined during this time as large territorial stretch extending from Bengal in the east to Punjab in the west and from the river Narmada up in the north, for the present work it should be construed only as the heartland of Hindustan unless mentioned otherwise.
The first chapter deals with the early adventurers and their role in effecting transition in Indian military culture. It places their role in context of prevailing condition of the north Indian states and their growing need for European military experts for the modernization of their army. It questions various erroneous formulations and widely propagated views about the early adventurers' military assignments and tries to see them in the light of information provided by more authentic sources. For instance, the chapter questions the usage of the term 'deserter' for these adventurers and argues that in most of the cases they were allowed by the rulers themselves to leave their state. Through the detailed study of the adventurers' military engagements, the chapter attempts to bring out the transfer of military technology and various training programs organized by them. The chapter pays particular attention to the English reaction to the adventurers' presence in north India. It is argued in the chapter that contrary to what Bidwell stated, there are evidence replete with English anxiety and worries on the adventurers' presence in the region and the English company's 'all-that-is-possible' efforts to get these persons expelled from this part of India.

While the first chapter is about military transition, the second chapter focuses on the later adventurers' accomplishments and transformation in the indigenous military system. De Boigne and Perron, who were the famous adventurers, their activities constituted the second phase of the adventurers' presence in India. The creation of five completely Europeanized brigades by these adventurers, popularly called as 'Army of Hindustan', and their military successes against various large but untrained armies forms the major part of the chapter. The chapter also accounts for De Boigne's Aligarh principality and its emergence as a multi-functioning territorial entity. Another important formulation of the chapter is about the changing equations of the adventurers with the English and its bearing on the historical process. For instance,
De Boigne, the prominent adventurer of this phase, had amicable relations with the English company officers. At the end, the chapter discusses the reasons for the outbreak of war between the ‘Army of Hindustan’ and Lord Lake and the circumstances that led to the latter’s victory.

The third chapter focuses on the role of the French adventurers in political and military developments in Awadh in the post-Buxar phase. It brings out the military mutations that the Nawab’s army underwent under the guidance and command of these professionals and consequent changes in the Nawab’s attitude towards the English. The chapter delves into the complexities of tussle existing between the two powers and the Nawab’s growing defiance to various English injunctions. One of the important causes of tussle was the Nawab’s open defiance to the ever increasing English demands for the expulsion of the French from his service. The chapter brings out the names of the important French adventurers who helped in the modernization of Awadh armed forces and brought changes in the militaryscape of the region. The chapter critically examines the long-held stereotypes that Gentil and his cohorts were representatives of the French government. That, partis français was organized by Gentil to push the French influence in Awadh. The chapter tries to examine these claims by using new set of sources, both the English as well as French. The main question raised here is whether Gentil and the partis français in Awadh had any official contacts with the French government?

The role of the adventurers in the politics of north India constitutes the core of the fourth chapter. The chapter deals with adventurers’ role in the diplomatic initiatives of Chevalier and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II. It examines their role as political negotiators and emissaries and its impact on the policies of the Mughal Empire. Although the diplomatic initiative put into execution by Madec and other adventurers
could not be accomplished, it was an interesting historical development of the period as it reflects the growing European involvement in Indian affairs. This chapter tries to examine whether new orientation was given to the military politics of the north Indian states and generated a possibility for the formation of a gigantic alliance with the French government by including the Marathas and other Indian powers.

The fifth chapter tries to explore the commercial and social world of the adventurers and its impact. It examines their role in the changes brought by them in the existing pattern of trade. This was quite evident from the differences in the trading pattern during Polier and De Boigne's time. For instance, the adventurers' trade during De Boigne's time became more Europe-oriented, and indigo and cotton cloth formed the most important items of trade. The chapter also examines tactics and methods employed by the adventurers in manoeuvering their trade. It evinces whether trade and politics were isolated frames or not and explores whether successful manoeuvering of the trade by them depended on deft and skilful use of politics. The chapter also tries to examine the role of the adventurers' friendly relations with the English company in shaping up their trading world. Another important concern of the chapter is their reputation as traders and to what extent it benefitted their enterprises.

A study of the social world and the family life of the adventurers forms another aspect of the chapter. It deals with their matrimonial alliances and their Indian families. This section tries to examine their social and family relations and to what extent there existed commitment in these relations. Through the study of their social life and adoption of Indian customs and manners the chapter attempts to show the expanding social base of these men and their growing attachment for India. The section also deals with the adventurers' growing appreciation and admiration for Indian culture and civilization which emanated from their painstaking collections of Indian
manuscripts and texts. Their collection of Indian manuscripts and texts on Indian religion and history and their attempts at popularization of India’s glorious past in the Western countries forms another feature of this section.

As most of the European adventurers were French, therefore, in the present work they would be mentioned as French adventurers or European adventurers or simply adventurers. For the present work it means the same unless there is any particular context.

The quotes from French sources have been used wherever they have been found important and relevant. However, the English translation of all the French quotes has either been given in the footnotes or in the running text itself. If the French quotes have been given in the running text then its English translation is given in the footnote. But if the French quote is in the footnote then its English version is present in the main text. In the cases where some more detailed, authentic, and relevant information is available that has been given in the appendix.