

**"A STUDY OF EARLY COLONIAL INSTITUTIONS
OF POLICING AND CONTROL :
THE *SIHBANDIS*, *NAJIBS*, *CHAUKIDARS*,
(1770-1830)"**

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DECLARATION

Certified that the dissertation entitled 'A Study of Early Colonial Institutions of Policing and Control : The Sihbandis, Najibs, Chaukidars (1770-1830)' submitted by **RITU SAXENA**, is in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Philosophy of this university. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this university and is her own work.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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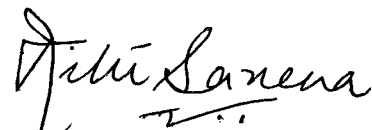
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Introduction

This is a study of the multitudinous agencies of policing and control, that were utilised by the early British regime to effectively harness and consolidate its nascent rule in India. The work looks at the nature and functioning of certain indigenous institutions like *sihbandis*, *najibs*, *barkandazes* (the irregular militia) and *chaukidars* (the local watchmen) and analyses the processes of their transformation under the political regime of the English East India Company.

The study spans from the late 18th and early 19th Century (1770-1830) as this was the critical transition period in which the English East India Company evolved as the predominant political power in North India. The geographical and regional focus of the work is on the Bengal Presidency, divided into the Lower and Western Provinces (latter became the North Western Provinces after 1836). Besides parts of Bengal, it also included the Indo-Gangetic areas of Awadh, Benaras and Bihar.

The work tries to illustrate that the notions of policing and control was very well entrenched into the psyche of administrators of the emerging colonial state. Thus inferring that the roots of modern colonial policing can be traced back to this early period of the Company State. However, due to the predominance of the 'Imperial militarism'¹ in this period the administrative development of a police constabulary was temporarily stymied.

¹. Implicit to the understanding of Imperial militarism is the preception that the colonial army took precedence over the other colonial institution in the establishment and maintenance of the British rule in India. It was given priority in financial planning and the social and economic infrastructure were set about with the army firmly in mind. This imperial militarism bred on the rationale that emphasized the precariousness of the British rule and showed that its security could only be assured by constant preparedness for war. Consequently military imperatives and army's demands for resources were given priority in peacetime as well as wartime. For a detailed study on this aspect, see Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon : Colonial armies and the Garrison State in India (1819-1835)*, (London, 1995). According to Peers the overwhelming penetration of militaristic values in the colonial Realpolitik made the early British rule in India 'the Garrison State'.

Historians have explained the consolidation of the early British rule primarily in terms of the superior fiscal base that it acquired in North India. C.A. Bayly² argued about the 'commercialization of royal power' which began under the Mughals, and was extended by the regional polities that succeeded them in the course of early 18th Century. This extension facilitated redeployment of merchant capital to the mushrooming *qasbahs* and the smaller permanent markets (*ganjs*) attached to them. According to Bayly, it was here the infrastructure of European trade in and its ultimate dominion over India was constructed. The vast scale in which the Company exercised and extended the pre-colonial practice of 'military fiscalism' has provided another explanation for the consolidation of their rule in India.³ Then there are works by Thomas Metcalfe⁴ and Anand Yang⁵, that highlight upon the 'collaborative' role of the indigenous rural elites, namely the local land controllers (ie. zamindars and *talluqdars*) in facilitating

2. C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars : North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, (1770-1870)*, (Cambridge, 1983). Besides this, his work entitled, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire ; New Cambridge History of India*, Vol. 2.1, (Cambridge, 1988), convincingly shows the extent to which the course and nature of Britain's empire in India was dictated by developments in Indian society and Indian economy, developments that were often well beyond British control. In his study, *Imperial Meridian : the British Empire and the World*; (Harlow, 1989) he situated Indian developments within a broader global context, this a balancing periphery against metropole.
3. 'Military Fiscalism' entailed the collection of revenue by a centrally controlled body of officials who collect revenue from a broad base of payers for the purpose of maintaining a centrally controlled and hegemonic military system. Burton Stein has emphasized on this practice to explain the dominant position it came to occupy, more specifically in South India. See B. Stein, 'State formation and economy reconsidered', part-I, *Modern Asian Studies (MAS)*, Vol. 19, part-III, (July, 1985), pp387-413. Also see, Douglas Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, who talks of a symbiotic relationship that was struck 'between the army and territorial revenues' in which territorial revenues were increasingly dedicated to paying for the military's upkeep, the army was crucial in creating the stability required for efficient revenue collection, p4.
4. Thomas Metcalfe, *Land, Landholders and the British Raj*, (Berkeley, 1979). Metcalfe brings out this collaborative relationship in the context of Awadh region in 19th and early 20th Century. According to him the triangular encounter between the State, Raja (big landholders) and zamindars (relatively smaller landholders) remained from Mughal times much into 20th Century the central theme of much of the rural history of Gangetic plains, p17.
5. Anand A. Yang, *The Limited Raj : Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District (1793-1920)*, (Berkeley, 1989). Yang highlights upon the role of the Indian elite in facilitating the Company's revenue collection and thereby contributing to its political dominance and stability in Saran district of Bihar. He constructs the model of 'limited Raj' to explain the arrangements that the British effected with local controllers. to ensure a free flow of revenue. He analyses the dynamics of this 'limited Raj' by explaining its functioning at the lowest level where the power of the colonial state tapered off and the landholder's system of control took over. Yang argues that these two control systems collectively sustained British rule in the region, p6.

the Company's revenue collection and fanning out its administrative authority. The centrality of the military in the stability of Company rule has been brought out by historians like D.H.A. Kolff⁶, P.J. Marshall⁷, Seema Alavi⁸ and Douglas Peers⁹, who bring out how the 'military culture' of North India was in transition in the 18th Century enabling the Company to achieve its political supremacy. The complexities of the socio-cultural transactions of the British administrators with the indigenous colonized society has been well illustrated by the works of Bernard Cohn¹⁰.

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6. D.H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoys : The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850*, (Cambridge, 1990). His work focuses on the concept of 'military labour market' and the significant role it played in the processes of state formation in late medieval North India. He discusses the role of man power factor (human resource like commercial and fiscal) through the military services which had a life cycle or commodity exchange value which was 'integral to the South Asian society and Realpolitik'.
7. P.J. Marshall, 'Western arms in maritime Asia in the early phases of expansion', *MAS*, Vol. 14, part-I, (February, 1980), pp13-28.
8. Seema Alavi, *The Sepoy and the Company : Tradition and Transition in Northern India (1770 - 1830)*, (New Delhi, 1995). Her work analyses 'military culture of North India' as it evolved to keep pace with the political expansion of the East India Company. The study argues that 'the *sipahi*(s) constituted one of the few ideological bridges between the Company and Indian society and formed a major source of legitimacy for it'. It shows that the boundary between the army and society was much more blurred than it came to be in the late 19th Century, p1.
9. Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, (Supra Note 1.). His work emphasizes on the centrality of 'colonial armies' in the establishment of the early British rule in India. Peers says that the British behaviour in India can be defined as a particular variant of militarism—a form designed to meet Anglo-Indian condition of rule and perceptions of security. Unlike many other styles of militarism which pitted civilians against the army, the Anglo-Indian variant bound together army officers and civilian employees of the East India Company, as well as kings officer serving in India, for ultimately they shared the same ideas of how Indian society was configured and consequently what constituted the gravest threat to their position in India. This 'Anglo-Indian Militarism' as he call it, was instrumental in the consolidation of the 'garrison state' in India, p7 and p45.
10. The underlying current for such historiography emphasizes that 'power conditions knowledge and knowledge reinforces power'. Bernard Cohn, has underlined a set of "investigative modalities", by which the knowledge of colonized Indian society was generated to consolidate a greater grip on it. These 'modalities' according to him were 'the historiographic, observational/travel, the survey, the enumerative, the museological and the surveillance and sanitary modalities'. In U.Kalpagam, 'Cartography in Colonial India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 29th, 1995, New Delhi, p87, cf. Bernard S. Cohn, 'The Anthropology of a Colonial State and its Forms of Knowledge', paper presented at Wenner-Gren Conference on *Tensions of Empire : Colonial Control and Visions of Rule*, (Spain, 1988). Also see B.S. Cohn, 'The Command of Language and the Language of Command', pp276-330, in R. Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies Vol. IV : Writings on South Asian History and Society*, (New Delhi, 1985), p276.

Michael Fisher¹¹, Nicholas Dirks¹², Ronald Inden¹³ who have shown how the processes of 'knowledge' gathering, its codification and interpretation were used to legitimize British 'power' over the colonial society. Radhika Singha¹⁴ elucidates upon the ideological role that the introduction and manipulation of the concept of 'rule of law' played in Company's legitimacy and dominance, providing it with what Rudrangshu Mukherjee has called 'a monopoly of violence'.¹⁵ More recently, C.A. Bayly in his new study has attempted to explain the makings of Company power in terms of the construction of a vibrant 'information order'. This paid reliance on the information networks, comprising 'knowledgable communities' of indigenous informants, spies, *harkaras* (messenger), *kasids* (runners) that were a part of the pre-colonial political tradition.

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11. Michael H. Fisher, 'The Office of *Akhbar Nawis* : The transition from Mughal to British Forms', *MAS*, 27, I, 1993, pp45-82.
 12. Nicholas B. Dirks, 'Colonial Histories and Native Informants : Biography of an Archive'. In Carol Breckenridge and Peter Van derVeer, *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament : Perspectives on South Asia*, (New Delhi, 1994). pp280-313.
David Lelyveld, 'Colonial Knowledge and the Fate of Hindustani', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35,4, (1993).
 13. Ronald Inden, *Imagining India*, (Oxford, 1990). This work heavily inspired by Edward Said's, *Orientalism*, (London, 1978) and illustrates the power of imagination and tries to expose, to what extent India's image is the construct of the needs of Western World. The whole colonial discourse on India and its past formed the part of a process to invent an antithetical but inferior world which underwrote the claims of a western hegemony.
 14. Radhika Singha, "The Privilege of taking life : Some 'anomalies' in the Law of Homicide in the Bengal Presidency", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, (*IESHR*), 30, 2, 1993. According to Singha, the early colonial concept of sovereignty was one which negated the legitimacy of all other authorities in the exercise of force and violence in public life (to a certain extent private too). It also upheld a realm of transaction between state and subject, that of 'rule of law' in which the juridical identity was supposed to transcend all other identities (paternal, religious or casteist) and social hierarchies. The drive of early colonial state's 'rule of law' was to establish a monopoly of judicial and punitive authority was actively oriented to the civil pacification of the society but also to the disinvestment of the other authorities which claimed the right to use violence on basis of sacred, patriarchal or paternal rights, p182.
 15. Rudrangshu Mukherjee, ' "Satan let loose upon earth" : The Kanpur massacres in India in the Revolt of 1857', *Past and Present*, No. 128 (August, 1990), pp92-117. R. Mukherjee, analysing the 1857 mutiny, argues that ' British rule in India, as an autocracy, had meticulously constructed a monopoly of violence. The result of 1857 shattered that monopoly by matching an official, alien violence by the indigenous violence of the colonized'.

From the 1770s the Company administrators successfully subordinated it to their own political advantage.¹⁶

But the historical studies on the trends and nature of colonial policing are relatively few and they too fall short in establishing the interlinkages between policing networks and the processes of early colonial state formation. For instance the works by Sir Percival Griffiths¹⁷ and Narayani Majumdar¹⁸, are of limited relevance since they equate the development of the policing institutions with the concept of 'rule of law' and hence invariably end up merely discussing numerous regulations, plans, proposals in the sphere of criminal justice administration; giving a kind of secondary and summary treatment to the multitudinous agencies of policing and their transition under the early British rule.

More recently the research of David Arnold brings out the development of the colonial 'civil' constabulary (and its social compositions) in the content of post-mutiny vigilance¹⁹. His work fosters the notion that early British policing was primarily exercised by the help of military and the need for a 'civil'constabulary arose because of the events of the Mutiny of 1857 which displayed the perils of such a reliance on the military.

^{16.} C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information : Intelligence gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780 -1870*, (Cambridge, 1996).

^{17.} Sir Percival Griffiths, *To Guard My People : The History of the Imperial Police*, (London, 1971) The work is a comprehensive study and spans over all the three Presidencies. It basically looks at the developments of policing interms of constitutional progress of various formulated or enacted rules, regulations, plans and proposals by the colonial administrators.

^{18.} Narayani Majumdar, *Justice and Police in Bengal : A Study of Nizamat in Decline*, (Calcutta, 1969). Her study brings out the various measures introduced by early British administrators to refurbish the declining institutions of criminal justice and police in Bengal. Like the title of the book suggests she clubs together aspects of justice and policing in the same study to bring out their interlinkages. As with the title, so with the subject in the study; policing gets a secondary and summary treatment in the book which primarily revolves around the reorientation and changes brought in the system of criminal justice and its administration.

^{19.} David Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule : Madras (1857 - 1947)*, (New Delhi, 1986). His work is conceived within the terms of the broader debate over the nature and impact of colonial rule in the context of post - mutiny phase and a rapidly spreading nationalist movement. He successfully uses the colonial police to serve as a metaphor for the colonial regime as a whole. His study primarily concentrates on the development of policing in the scenario of post mutiny-vigilance in an era of matured colonial regime when the dependence of the military for territorial expansion needed to be reduced.

This work attempts to fill the gap in historical researches on the early British policing by establishing the interlinkages of the indigenous policing and control agencies with the early colonial state. The study highlights the British efforts to set up policing networks by building on the indigenous institutions of control they found in existence both at the village and town level. The work will attempt to trace the systematic processes by which the British improvisation of pre-colonial policing agencies, at one level transformed their character and at the other level set up a hierarchy of institutions between the civil and the militaristic spheres.

Recent works on the military's role in the early British state formation have brought out that from the very onset of the Company rule systematic abstraction of the military from the civilian society had begun. Even as the military encompassed significant social groups of the indigenous society it always tried to retain a separate and superior identity.²⁰ The organisation of para-military institutions of policing and control—like the *sihbandis* and *najibs*—that were located somewhere between the military and civilian society provides us with an effective example of how the British sought to create separate civil and military enclaves.

The interface of indigenous policing agencies—such as *faujdars*, *barkandazes*, *sihbandis*, *najibs*, *chaukidars*—with the civilian society reveals significant ways in which the British redefined the nature of these pre-colonial institutions. As the British introduced their concepts of 'public order'²¹ these agencies came to acquire new roles.

^{20.} Seema Alavi, *The Sepoy and the Company*, talks of the early British measure to create a separate identity for the company soldier as being radically distinct and superior from the general civilian population because of his association with the 'military culture'. This was to inspire an unquestioned allegiance and awe for its army and authority he served. Even in case of the Invalid Thanah by which the retired and defunct soldiers of the army were settled in the civilian society nurtured this military exclusivity. Thus the Invalid Thanah being a part of the civil society was separated from the civil administration and local law courts, pp95-154.

^{21.} The early colonial notions of 'public order' entailed a close monitoring of the colonized 'civil' society and its social groups. This was transpired by the growth of a revitalised conservatism which was a defensive reaction against the threat of French Revolution in the late 18th and early 19th Century which came to threaten the European social order as a whole.

The first chapter analyses the early interface of the British with the indigenous institutions of Mughal *faujdar* and *darogha* and the early colonial efforts to transform them to their political advantage. It demonstrates the modification brought out by Warren Hastings in his refurbishment of the Mughal institution of *faujdar* in 1770s. The Orientalist Hastings claimed that he would 'restore' the *faujdar* institutions, which he said had 'decayed' during the course of the 18th Century. In effect though this Mughal institution was restored, its nature was transformed. The *faujdar* under the Company rule was gradually stripped of its militaristic connotations and was given a civil bias. Though an Orientalist, Hastings did not restore the indigenous agency of Mughal *faujdar* to its past form. Similarly the so called 'reforms' of the Anglicist Cornwallis and his efforts to 'introduce' the institution of *darogha* into the countryside of Bengal was also an improvisation on the Mughal *thanadar*. Cornwallis' *darogha* was a 'new' name for the old agency of policing (namely the *thanadars*). These significant British strategies indicate among other things the compromise between the Orientalist and Anglicist debates for purposes of governance.

Chapter two, studies in detail the transition of the Mughal *sihbandis* as an institution of vigilance and control under the early British rule. It is argued that from an ad-hoc administrative practice for the purpose of revenue collecting duties of Mughal times it was transformed into a 'semi-militaristic' institution of policing and control under the Company State. The British 'organised' it through various measures like the introduction of uniforms dresses distinct from those of the regular army soldiers, notions of discipline through physical training, creation of infrastructure to house them, attachment of the services of native doctor to their 'establishment' etc.

Similarly, the *najibs* transitioned under the Company rule from being the traditional Mughal 'gentlemen troopers' to an agency of colonial control. This change is dated to 1764 after their disastrous performance in the battle of Buxar in the armies of regional rulers. This transformation relegated them to the periphery of the Company's military and political ambit and led to their emergence as the 'irregular' militia pool for policing and escort duties. By the early 19th Century they were integrated to the Company state as organised corps or companies for example we come across

'nujeeb corp' deployed in various 'tomans' (detached parties) significantly utilised under the Thuggee and Dacoity Department in 1830s and 1840s to exterminate such practices as the mobile policing squads for surveillance and control.

The final chapter focuses on such indigenous institutions of policing and supervision as the *barkandazi* and *chaukidari* who were never organised into corps or companies like the *sihbandis* or *najibs* but were nevertheless co-opted into the network of colonial control. These subaltern agencies worked at the very lowest rung of administrative structure as local institutions of policing. This chapter will highlight that each of these local agency worked in tandem with each other even though they retained their distinct identities. Thus the boundaries between them appear to be blurred. The *barkandazes* and *paiks* operated under both the official and private service as retainers and the nature of their jobs depended on the character and needs of their employer; for example we have *barkandazes* both as policemen and ruffians, (local henchmen). The chapter will analyse how these were raised, utilised and controlled by the early British State.

The local watch-and-ward agency of *chaukidar* too had diverse range of functions in the community besides being a policeman. The British efforts to assimilate it more closely to their general administrative structure under their direct control is discussed in the context of the Magisterial Inquiry of 1822. This Inquiry highlighted the various issues and measures that needed to be enacted to co-opt the *chaukidar* more closely to the colonial rule as an 'effective' institution of local control.

Together, all the above mentioned institutions became the 'enforcement agencies' that enacted the early British perceptions of public order by undertaking measures of vigilance, supervision, control and coercion of the colonized population.

CHAPTER 1

Mughal *Faujdar* and Company *Darogha* in late the 18th Century: Early British Interface with the Indigenous agencies of control and policing.

INTRODUCTION

On their assuming the role of administrators the British came to interlink their perceptions of 'public order' closely with their ideas of political sovereignty. The obsessive colonial preoccupation with problem of 'order', was it is said 'characteristic of the colonial rule in general for order is essential to such advantage as it anticipates from imposing its rule on the dependency'.¹ From the very inception of their rule the British showed 'undue concern' to the 'poor and decadent' state of the indigenous policing networks and the public order it upheld.² The British criticism of the existing indigenous policing and control networks provided them with the much required opportunity to intervene in their organisation, facilitating their reorientation to the nascent colonial regime.

¹. Basudev Chatterjee, 'The Darogha and the Countryside : The Imposition of police control in Bengal and its Impact (1793-1837),' *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (hereafter *IESHR*), Vol XVIII, No. 1, (1982), p38 cf. David Arnold, 'Police Power and Colonial Rule in South India (1914-1917)', *Modern Asian Studies* (hereafter *MAS*), 11 (1), 1977, p101. Chatterjee goes on to say that it is significant to note that the British Government's reliance on the police for maintaining "a favourable political and economic environment", was very strong in the colony. Even though professional police force in England during the early 18th Century was regarded as "continental" and "tyrannous"; it came to constitute under different conditions, an indispensable element of control, cf. R.J. White, *Waterloo to Peterloo*, (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp116-17.

². Almost every British account of the indigenous colonized society by late 18th early 19th Century is full of numerous accounts and observations about the disorderly state of the territories the Company rule. Sir William Jones, the famous Orientalist with a penchant for appreciating the tradition and its continuity; in an account talked of "many streets (of Calcutta - the Capital city) through which people passed after the sunset at the perils of their lives. The watch house were haunted by criminals ; abandoned. Ruffians, masked and armed, burgled houses with little risk of capture and committed outrages on inoffensive citizens". According to him, the city had, 'more the appearance of a jungle than an inhabited town'. A. Aspinall, *Cornwallis in Bengal*, (London, 1931), NAI, New Delhi, p101, cf. Chatham Papers, packet 362, William Jones to Pitt, 5th Feb 1785.

The efforts of Warren Hastings to refurbish the languishing institution of Mughal *faujdari* and the measures of Lord Cornwallis to introduce the agency *darogha* in the countryside of Bengal were inspired by such colonial ambitions. This early British administrative engineering is the focus of this chapter.

'ANGLO-INDIAN MILITARISM' AND THE CONCEPT OF EARLY BRITISH POLICING AND CONTROL

Douglas Peers in his interpretation of the early company state bring out its militarism as the key factor behind its consolidation in late 18th and early 19th Centuries. According to him this 'Anglo-Indian militarism', as he calls it in its form 'was unique to India for it stemmed from a particular interpretation of the relationship between Indian polities and the mechanism through which the British could maintain control'³ over the colony.

The Anglo-Indian Militarism was quite central to the establishment of the colonial regime. It had its ideological legitimation in its partly being 'informed by orientalist thought'.⁴ This militaristic ideology of rule worked from the assumption that the indigenous Indian society was inherently militaristic. Thus the British authority was sought to be created by an establishment of monopoly over the means and institutions of coercion.

According to Thomas Metcalfe, 'as they (the British) began to put together their Raj in the latter half of the 18th Century the British had to devise a vision of India's

³ Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon : Colonial armies and the garrison state in India (1819-1835)*, (London, 1995), p45. According to Peers, this 'Anglo-Indian Militarism' basically founded itself upon a reading of Indian political and social culture and the means by which the British could work with these cultural parameters. It was not 'imported' phenomena. Even though in Britain too, this period was characterized as highly militaristic. Jeremy Bentham in late 18th Century declared that "by a standing army is that we are governed". In Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings : James Mill's the History of British India and Orientalism*, (New York, 1992), p5, cf. Jeremy Bentham, *Plan of Parliamentary Reform in Form of Catechism with Reasons for each article, with an Introduction showing the Necessity of Radical and the Inadequacy of Moderate Reforms*, (London, 1817), ppXXXII-XXXV.

⁴ Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, it was felt that the only sound basis for power and authority in a traditionally militaristic society 'must continue to rest on the ability to monopolize the means of coercion'. In this any sort of public display of violence was considered inimical to the political sovereignty of the Company rule.

past and of its future. Without such a vision there was no way they could justify their rule, much less shape a coherent administrative system'.⁵ For them 'despotism' came to aptly describe the way in which " 'the Oriental states were organised. They comprehended India's past with this notion of 'Oriental despotism' ", which not only legitimated their own militarism but also became a way of contrasting India's earlier history with the British notion of 'law and order'.⁶

The early British notions of policing were an important constituent of this 'Anglo-Indian Militarism'. The British need to relieve the military from administrative tasks led to the reorganisation of the indigenous policing networks under the early colonial regime. Also such measures were inspired by the imperial militaristic notion of monopolising all legitimate instruments of coercion in the public sphere of the colonial authority. These early colonial policing institutions were meant to relieve the military for its imperial conquests.⁷ In addition these were to be the symbol of 'law and order'.

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5. Thomas Metcalfe, *Ideologies of the Raj, The New Cambridge History of India*, Vol 3.4, (Berkeley, 1995), p6, cf. Richard Koebner, *Despot and Despotism : Vicissitudes of a Political Tern, Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, vol 14 (1951), pp275-302.
6. Ibid, p7. Metcalfe says that "the notion of 'oriental despotism' had enduring implications for the emerging Raj in India, for it carried with it the connotation that Asian Countries had no laws, or property, and hence its people had no rights". It became a way of contrasting India's earlier history with 'the law and order that the British conceived they were bringing'. Henceforward, as the British began to write the History of India the concept of 'despotism' took on fresh life. He says that even though, "it was a thing of past, but at the same time the 'idea' of despotism had to inform the whole of that past", cf. Alexander Dow, *History of Hindostan*, Vol. 3, *Dissertation on Despotism*, (London, 1770), ppVII-XXII.
7. This was invariably linked to the colonial notion of discipline with regard to its military, as it was felt that the employment of regular troops of the company army in the detailed internal 'civil' duties is "pregnant with evil of a most serious nature, that it will essentially injure the discipline of the army which it is impossible to perserve whilst the troops are thus detached". It was felt that they were in danger of acquiring 'unmilitary habits'. Abstract of Militia Returns with Remarks, signed by the Hon'ble Governor General Warren Hastings, extracted from Bengal Revenue Consultations, dated 12th August 1783, India Office Library Records, London. There was a general order to restrict the usage of regular sepoys in the arrest of thugs. From, Macnagthen, Secretary to the Government, Fort William To, Capt. P.A. Reynolds Officiating General Superintendent of Thuggee and Dacoity Dept., Foreign Dept. Political Branch, Political Consultations (P.C), 19th December 1836, No. 48, NAI, New Delhi. This has been discussed in detail with regards to the Company's relationship with its 'irregular' militia in chapter two ahead.

I

Warren Hastings supported this 'Anglo-Indian Militarism', he also perceived the army as a separate and superior entity. In his measures to refurbish the institution of Mughal *faujdari* in 1770s, he worked to separate the close association of military and policing. Consequently his measures took away the military connotations of the Mughal *faujdari*. This marked a major modification in the Mughal institution of *faujdar* which had been central to the Mughal military culture.

FAUJDAR IN PRE-COLONIAL TIMES

Under the Mughal rule the *faujdar* was a significant part of the indigenous policing network and as an administrative agency it came in the effectively reflect the close interlinkages of military and policing of pre-colonial times. It was a Persian term that was essentially militaristic in its connotations. The word combined *fauj* (army) with *dar* (one who keeps) literally meaning a keeper of army, chief of a body of troops or a military commandant. As an officer of provincial administration the palate of his functions was mixed and as any pre-modern policing agency, he acted in 'various capacities'. Besides being the police officer, he was a part of the revenue administration⁸ also as well being the military head of a *sarkar*.⁹ Under *faujdar*s, there were *shikdars* incharge of a *pargana* and there were *thanadars*¹⁰

^{8.} J.C. Curry, calls *faujdar* as being 'primarily a revenue official' who worked for its smooth realization and channelization. For this *faujdar* he was vested with various policing duties to maintain order See J.C. Curry, *The Indian Police*, (New Delhi, 1977), p21.

^{9.} *Sarkar* - It was a term used for districts in the administrative and territorial sub-division. The province of the Mughal Government was placed under the *Subahdar / nazim* (governor) who was directly responsible to the Emperor for overall administration of the province. The province was divided into *Sarkars* (districts) and each *Sarkar* was placed under the charge of a *faujdar*. They were appointed by the Emperor but were placed under the direction and control of *Subahadars*.

^{10.} *Thanadar* - He was miscellaneously referred to as the keeper of a *thana* or a post for watch-and-ward, collection of customs or transit duties etc. Usually used in the sense of petty police officers.

who worked under the *shikdars*. The *thanadars* were incharge of a *thana* or post and were assisted by *barkandazes* and *chaukidars*.¹¹

As his name suggests *faujdar* 'commanded' a 'military force'. He had a contingent of troops ranging from 500 to 1,500 soldiers that comprised the local militia pool. As an agency of control it had militaristic ambience though, it performed policing duties and executive functions of revenue administration, *faujdar* formed an important part of the militaristic authority of the Mughal rule. Policing was not recognised as separate department of administration and was an intrinsic component of the militaristic authority of the state.

As a up keeper of law and order his duties ranged from apprehending criminals, committing them to a court for trial and punishment to curbing smaller rebellions, arresting rebellious chiefs, bands of highway robbers etc. Besides this he functioned they executive capacity as a revenue official to form part of the revenue collecting and securing machinery in the districts.

Ain-i-Akbari by Abul Fazl gives an interesting review of the duties of *faujdar*

"Destroy the forts of lawless men and rebel chief as the means of punishing them. Guard the roads, protect the revenue payers, assist and give (armed) support to the agents (*gumashtahs*)¹² of the *jagirdars* (in case of the military fiefs) and *kroris*¹³ (in case of crown lands) at the time of collecting revenue".

11. (a) *Barkandazes*-were matchlockmen who acted as retainers of influential people in both private and official capacity. For a more detailed discussion on them and their role in the local society see chapter three, section I.
(b) *Chaukidars* were the local watch and ward agency for a detailed study see chapter three, section II.
12. *Gumashtas* - an agent employed by indigenous merchants and European Companies for trade negotiations like procurment of raw materials, making advance payments and finally collecting the products. The zamindars used him to collect rent and the bankers deployed him receive money. They were the commissioned factors, persons sent forth upon any particular business.
13. *Kroris* - This was a title used for a revenue officer placed in charge of a tract theoretically expected to yield a revenue of one *kror* of *dam* i.e. 2½ Lakhs of Rupees. The arrangement was

Furthermore,

"forbid the blacksmith to manufacture matchlocks, urge the *thanadars* who you appoint under yourself, to take complete possession of their charges, to abstain from dispossessing people from their rightful property and from levying any forbidden cess (*abwab*)..... guard the roads, cut the jungles, demolish the illegal forts".¹⁴

MUGHAL *FAUJDAR* IN THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY¹⁵

By the early 18th Century the institution of Mughal *faujdari* was fast eroding and its identity as an agency of control, was fast vanishing. It fell victim to the trends of decentralization as was the competing growth in the authority of local zamindars, *talluqadars*, *madad-i-mash*¹⁶ assignees who held back the revenue and resource surplus away from the imperial centre. The *faujdari* which symbolised the imperial authority in the province decayed in comparison. It found itself crippled with depleting finances at its disposal, which considerably reduced its capacity to function effectively as an agency of order and control. The balance of authority came to tilt in favour of the local land controllers who came to exercise their own policing and control mechanisms accumulating private retainers.

Akbar's (see *Ain-i-Akbari*, part-II, p13). But the title was continued in later times irrespective of the amount of revenue to be collected by this officer. It later on meant simply 'a collector of state dues' and we have a class of *karoris* or *ganjs* or the collectors of markets.

¹⁴ *Ain-i-Akbari*, part-II, pp40-41. Also see Nicholas Manucci, *Storia-de-Mogor*, Part-II, pp450-451.

¹⁵ In the Awadh region in the early 18th Century, there were eight *faujdaris* five of these corresponded to the five *sarkars* of the province, namely Lucknow, Awadh, Khairabad, Bahraich and Gorakhpur, while Baiswara, Bilgram and Sultanpur Bilchri were relatively smaller *faujdaris*. The Bengal and Bihar provinces were also divided into eight *faujdaris* districts. In Bengal these were Islamabad (Chittagong), Sylhet, Rangpur Rangmati, Castle of Jalalgarh–Purnea, Rajmahal (Akbarnagar), Rajshahi, Burdwan and Midnapore. The eight districts of Bihar were Shahabad, Rohtas, Monghyr, Bihar, Champaran, Saran, Tirhut and Hajipur.

From, Gulam Hussein, *Seir-i-Mutaqherin or Review of Modern Times, being an History of India from year 118th 1194 of the Hedirah* (3Vols. repr Lahore, 1975) Vol. III, pp178-179.

¹⁶ *Madad-i-Mash* – These were revenue free grants to religious scholars, destitutes, and people of noble lineage who deemed it below their dignity to take up any employment. Jahangir called them *lashkar-e-dua* or an army prayers that always glorified Mughal rule in their scholarly works, and prayed for its longevity.

Among the early English records there were constant references about the ineffectiveness of the local *faujdar*s to function independently. It was noted that "the *faujdar* in most place have with them only from twenty to twenty five men, with such a small number the peace and order of a district cannot be maintained unless the zamindar and *talluqadar* cooperate with them in the suppression of crimes and in the tracing out of dacoits. ...Now *faujdar*s receive no support whatsoever from the zamindar or *talluqadar* and out of the twenty or twenty five men they have with them they have to post some of them to the outlying *chaukis* (posts). The *amalas* (deputies / retainers) of the zamindars not only withhold their support in arresting the robbers and dacoits but they secretly harbour them."¹⁷

Invariably linked to this, on the other hand was the development of the new *subahdari* that came to succumb over the identity of *faujdari* as an institution. Muzaffar Alam in his detailed study on the administrative history of the Awadh *subah* effectively elucidates upon such a phenomena.¹⁸ He says that the Governor's urge for a change in his position vis-a-vis the centre led him to facilitate all trends of decentralization. Among this was his increased control over the institution of *faujdari*. The seeds were sown when by 1722, the *faujdar* came to be appointed without reference to the Emperor. The process to encroach upon the identity *faujdari* started, as the new *Subahdar* started combining it with its own increasing authority in the region. Though Alam says that this combination of the two was not an absolutely new phenomena and the Mughal Government in a few cases in the late 17th and early 18th Century combined the two offices. But in Awadh by mid 18th Century however, more than one important *faujdari* consistently remained under the control of Governor, in turn fast losing its existence. According to Alam, a phenomenon which began as a privilege developed in the wake of the zamindari disturbances into an administrative necessity.¹⁹

^{17.} From, Mohammed Reza Khan, to the Secretary of the Government, Fort William, dated 11 December 1776, Corr. No. 422, *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. V, (1776-1780), p67.

^{18.} Muzaffar Alam, *Crisis of the Empire in Mughal North India : Awadh and Punjab (1707-1748)*, (New Delhi, 1986).

^{19.} The selection, appointment and security of the office of the *faujdar* in the *sarkar* and *chakla* came under the discretion of the Governor. Alam cf. *Farrukh Siyar Nama*, by Muhammad Ahsan Ijad Vol. III, p850 for the case of Saiyid Hidayat Ali Khan who was appointed by Safdar Jang to the *nizamat* and *faujdari* of *chakla* Khairabad in 1743. See. M. Alam, *Crisis of Empire*, p210.

The Governor endeavour was to keep *faujdaris*, if not under his own charge, at least in the control of his associates.

Such a practice gained ground because of the trend initiated by the *jagirdars* (Mughal military assignees) who came to have *faujdari* rights over their *jagir mahal* (estate). Alam cites the example of *Jagirdars* of Baiswara as a point in the case.²⁰ The perspectives of these *jagirdars cum faujdars* were very narrow, their chief aim having been to assure themselves of undisturbed realization of revenue of their *jagirs*. They did not hesitate to come to terms with the zamindar. This imposed a constraint on the exercise of power by the other regular *faujdar*s²¹ and their relationship with the local zamindars. Alam says that 'the governor (*subahadar*) by arrogating *faujdaris* for himself or to his dependable associates, sought to restore stability and orderliness in the province'.

Since *faujdar* had control over the finances of his *faujdari* and participated in the revenue administration of the district, in such adverse circumstances it found itself tangled in disputes over finance and revenue (realisation) matters.²² We come across references to *chaudharis* and *qanungos* holding '*faujdari* rights'. The *faujdar* of pargana Bilgram and *naib faujdar* of pargana Selak at the time of the Safdarjang, for instance held *chaudhurai* and *qanungoi* rights over their respective parganas in Awadh.²³

^{20.} Ibid, p71.

^{21.} Ibid, According to Alam this amounted to legitimizing dual authority in the province. He cites a letter of Rad Andaz Khan (the *faujdar* of Baiswara), which gives the details of the problems created for regular officials in the *pargana* by such a trend. It says 'the *jagirdars* possess *faujdari* rights over their *jagirs* have given shelter to the robbers in their *mahals* (Estates). These robbers are playing havoc in and around these places, especially in the *jagir* of Aziz Khan whose agent, Mahmud is (a leader of) robbers' the letter asks for remedy, p71. This practice was not just limited to Awadh region but was found in other parts of the Mughal Empire like the Golconda region.

^{22.} Ibid, these were referred to the office of the *faujdari* (that came to be called *Kachahari*). On some occasions, the *faujdar's* assertion of authority in such matters seems to have brought him into direct clash with the *qazi* whose judgements had conventionally been sought in disputes over *diwani* matters, p211.

Perhaps in such development lay the roots of *faujdari* acquiring substantial role in judicial functions of *pargana*. The Mughal historians did not attribute any judicial function to them. This process

From an institution it came to be a right that exchanged, many hands. since it implied *diwani* rights the 'new' *faujdari* could be farmed out too. Sometime in the reign of Muhammad Shah, the *faujdari* of Jaunpur is reported to have been taken on *ijara* (contract) by one Mir Abd-ur-Rahim of Qanauj. *Faujdari* fast devolved as a symbol of imperial authority and an administrative agency with its own separate identity. Alam says, it came to be mixed up with the new institutions of *nizamat* and *niyabat*²⁴ representing the new *Subahdari* in the *sarkar* and *parganas*. The term *faujdar* and *faujdari* came to be prefixed with other administrative agencies of the province e.g., *tahsil-i-faujdari*, *kharat(?) faujdari*, *faujdari-o-amaldari*, *akham-i-faujdari-o-diwani* appear in different contexts in some documents of the late 18th and early 19th Century. Though the exact nature and position of these terms and phrases is not very clear but the thing that is clear is that these terms did not indicate the same power and position as under the Mughals in the 17th Century.

It fast became an agency of inefficiency and oppression. The lack of credibility of the *faujdar* as a policing agency is criticised by the author of *Seir-i-Mutaqherin* who talks of the 'pompous' *faujdar* who 'whilst the sobs and groans of the oppressed are reaching the very canopy of heaven, these officers go on approving themselves incapable of performing the business expected of them. ...The *faujdari* office originally office, originally setup for the care of the subject has been perverted into a scene of extortion and tyranny'.²⁵

of attributing some judicial role was extended under the British rule. It appears from a letter of the committee of Circuit that crimes not capital were 'tried before the *faujdar*, but reported to the *nazim* for his judgment and sentence' Narayani Majumdar, *Justice and Police in Bengal: A study of Nizamat in Decline (1765-1793)*, (Calcutta, 1969) cf. Proceeding of Committee of Circuit, Kasimbazar, dated 15 August 1772, Bengal Criminal and Judicial Consultations, IOL, London.

^{23.} *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* - were revenue functionaries at the district level.

The admixture of such *diwani* functions with the *faujdari* gave rise to ambiguities and *faujdar* lost his separate identity as an autonomous agency.

^{24.} *Niyabat*(deputyship) and *Nizamat* (Governor of the districts). Earlier in the Mughal times *Nizamat* was term for the Governorship of a *subah* but by 18th Century since the Governor or *subahadari* assumed imperial roles the *nizamat* as an institution came to be associated with *faujdar*.

^{25.} Gulam Hussein, *Seir-i-Mutaqherin*, Vol. III, p182 and p193.

Even as his credibility as an agency of control crumbled, the *faujdar* continued to be the foci of all military mobilization and organization. Even in the early 18th Century, when the institution of *faujdar* came under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Awadh, the *faujdar's* role in the military sphere was not curbed but was further extended. He became one of the most important recruiting agents at the *pargana* and district level. Orders were sent to all *faujdar*s to send a certain number of armed men from every *pargana* for military service.²⁶

MUGHAL FAUJDAR AND THE BRITISH IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY

Warren Hastings was the first Governor General of the East India Company who emphasized the significance of effective policing networks to suppress crime and maintain order. He initiated an effort in this direction by restoring²⁷ the institution of Mughal *faujdar* in 1774.

In the Political Proceedings of the Governor General in Council dated 19th April 1774 Hastings developed his ideas on the subject of police. While congratulating his administration on the earlier establishment of civil and criminal courts for each district of Bengal in 1772. He emphasized that the country is yet too unsettled to allow their full benefits to be reaped. According to him numerous gangs of dacoits were infesting the province, alleging that they were being protected by the local zamindars. He mentions that some of the villages even paid regular tributes to the robbers to escape their pillage. For Hastings "all such evil had been produced by the disappearance of the Mughal *faujdar*".²⁸

^{26.} Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, p21. cf. Col. R. Smith to the Gentlemen of the Select Committee, 3 Nov. 1767, Bengal Secret Consultations, Fort William 17th Nov. 1767, P/A/7, India Office Library, London.

^{27.} From J.C. Curry, *The Indian Police*, (New Delhi, 1977), p24-25.

^{28.} Besides this Hastings also blamed the practice of farming revenues-*Ijaradari*-as another problem as 'the old zamindars had an interest in keeping down robberies in their localities as being liable to compensate losses', but the tax farmers had no such liabilities and were indifferent to the increase in robbery.

Hastings attempted to restore the Mughal *faujdar*s to suppress dacoities, violence and maintain order in the countryside. However even though the institution was restored its character was changed. Hastings new *faujdar* was to rely on the collaboration of the local zamindars and tax farmers (*ijaradars*) to enact his functions. These local authorities were to put their servants at the disposal of the *faujdar* to facilitate his policing responsibilities in the district. Another novel addition in the refurbished *faujdari* was that it was made accountable to a separate office under the authority and control of the President in Council to receive and collate the information collected and sent by the *faujdar*s. This step to insist upon the communication of intelligence was perhaps the very first steps towards the introduction of elements of accountability. Also the zamindars were liable to strict penalty in case of failure to comply by the just demands of the *faujdar*s or if their complicity with the criminals came to light.

Eighteen months after the above measures were enacted, Hastings returned to the subject of policing. This was because the zamindars and the tax-farmers had not been giving the *faujdar* any 'help' demanded of them. On 9th December, 1775, Hastings brought further changes in the policing network with his continued efforts to refurbish the *faujdari*. Around twenty six *faujdari thanas* were to be established in the chief towns of the larger districts. These *faujdaris* were to be under the superintendence of *naib nazim*, Muhammad Reza Khan. A central police office was founded in Murshidabad and the zamindars strongly urged to help the *faujdar* in the maintenance of law and order.

Though in name this Mughal institution was restored, but in substance its nature was altered. Hastings modified the basic military character of the *faujdari* system and gave it predominately civil leanings. Under the early British administration it was reared as primarily a policing agency. The new *faujdar* of this period unlike his counterpart of the Mughal times was not a participant in the revenue administration of the district. In the 'Instruments of Instructions' issued to the appointed *faujdar*s by Muhammed Reza Khan in 1776,²⁹ underlined that

²⁹. the Board approved these Instructions. For the English translation see. *Calender of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. V, No. 74, p39.

"know for certain that you are appointed solely for the protection of the country and for the tranquility and security of the ryotts. You are required to pursue every measure which may tend to promote the happiness of the ryotts ...(but) you are not any matter to interfere in the business of the revenue or make any attempts for that purpose".³⁰

The *faujdar* was to be an apprehending agency for the 'disturbers of peace' theives, murderers and highwaymen preventing them from 'villiany'. Its role in the penal network was recognised and highlighted. As the 'foujedar' was to be instrumental in causing 'punishments (to) be inflicted on'³¹ for offences on a smaller level *faujdar* came to be legalised as the punishing agency too. Instructions of Muhammad Reza Khan said that "if any person is taken up for stealing rice out of a field, a goat, buffalo, or fruits, having examined minutely into the affair, let a punishment be inflicted on him propotionable to his offence."³²

Conveying of intelligence reports gave it traits of examinable accountability. The *faujdar*s had to prepare a 'Sourat-haul' (*Surat-o-haal*)³³ and send it to the officers of the 'foujdari adawlut' that scrutinized it forwarding its own report to the *naib-nazim*.

Though the indigenious term was retained the *faujdari* resurrected by Hastings

^{30.} Ibid.

^{31.} Ibid, p40.

^{32.} Though *faujdar's* role in the penal network was formally recognised but similarity in the two terms *Faujdar* and *Faujdari Adalat* was more clearly defined, for the benefit of the British officials. In the course of a controversy in the Council Hastings made it clear that *Faujdari Adalat* were courts for the trials of all crimes and misdemeanors while *faujdar*s were 'police officers' entrusted with the maintenance of 'public peace'. They arrested all disturbers of peace but instead of trying and punishing them committed them to *Faujdari Adalat* for trials. This transfer was, in Hastings opinion the only connection between the *faujdar* and the *Faujdari Adalat*, 'their proceedings and their authority being totally distinct and independent'. Governor General in Council's Minutes, Foreign Dept. Secret Branch, (Secret, Consultations), dated 7th December 1775, No. 38, NAI, New Delhi.

^{33.} A report of affairs (description of existing conditions).

was to function in a collaborative capacity with the local zamindars and talluqadars. The new *faujdari* had no elements of a checking agency on the authority of the local zamindars as in the case of Mughal times. Even though the British intended to make it a collaborative institution with the zamindari it fell short of even those expectations. The *faujdari* of the Hastings' administration came to be no more than an agency subservient to the zamindari, much dependent on the help and the assistance of their establishment. The *faujdar* were now incharge of only a mere fraction of their earlier men and had to depend on the assistance of the zamindari retainers or even the local populace. This dependence on the zamindari eroded the power of the *faujdar*. For instance on one occasion the "*faujdari* men of the establishment between Murshidabad and Rajmahal were once in 1776 returning to their station after escorting some merchants to Shibganj when they encountered (two boats of) dacoits who were fully equipped with arms. The *faujdari* men gave them chase but were unsuccessful in catching them. They then asked the fishermen and other local people to help them in arresting the offenders but they refused to do so and declared that they had no connection with the *faujdari*".³⁴ The *faujdar* found himself urging the local influential men and the general populace to help them in maintenance of order.

With such depending tendencies the institution lost its credibility as an effective, reliable and autonomous administrative organ. On 6th April, 1781 the Governor General in Council abolished the establishment of *faujdar*s. The *faujdar* of Hugli, however retained his post at the pleasure of the Company's Government till July 1782, when even it was abolished too. Thus Hasting archetypal British Orientalist introduced major modification in the Mughal institution of *faujdari* even while he claimed to have restored it. As we saw the Mughal *faujdar* was a important constituent of the Mughal organisation but with Hastings intervention the *faujdar* was shorn of its military content. In the early colonial Bengal it was no longer an agency coordinating with the Company army. Instead it worked closely with and in dependence of the local zamindar.



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³⁴ From, Calender of Persian Correspondence, Vol. V, (1776-1780) Correspondence No. 422, p67.

II

CORNWALLIS AND MEASURES OF ANGLICIZATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION : INTRODUCTION OF THE COMPANY MAGISTRATES

The gathering tide of anglicization came to effect the British rule with the reign of Lord Cornwallis who was the Governor General of India from 1786-1793. The principle of anglicization had taken root much before him and Warren Hastings had tried to resist its implication, but he was the first one to recognise the necessity of abandoning the sham of Clive's 'dual government' and openly assert the British sovereignty.³⁵ Since the attempts of Warren Hastings to devolve the provincial administration in the hands of the local zamindars and *faujgars* proved unsuccessful the case for ushering reforms in the administration picked momentum.

'Cornwallis confirmed and extended the English administration' by taking over, the last vestiges of authority in the form of control over criminal justice administration from the Nawab. This formally made the Britishers incharge of policing in India as the order read "the police of the country is in future to be considered under the exclusive charge of officers of (British) Government, who may be specially appointed to that trust".³⁶ In his for bid anglicization he resorted to the classic Whig division of powers, with its separation of the Judiciary and Executive. So, in each district of the Bengal Presidency, a collector was established, who was as his name implied, the collector of fixed public dues. He was given no political or magisterial authority. The other figure in the district, representing the British government was to be the district Judge-Magistrate. He came to symbolize the colonial epithet of culmination of 'law and order'. He was given both the control of district police and was also empowered to administer 'Impersonal law' to dispense criminal justice.

³⁵. According to Eric Stokes, the Anglicism of the late 18th Century India was more a product of circumstance rather than design. Even by early 1780s Hastings had recognized its 'necessity' but attempted to resist its implications of abandoning the sham of Clive's 'double government' and to openly assert British sovereignty and responsibility. Stokes says that Hastings had feared 'the more lasting consequences of losing English ideas and methods on the weakened fabric of Indian society'. Eric Stokes, *English Utilitarians and India*, p2

³⁶. B.P. Saha, *The Indian Police: Its Quest for Legacy and Development*, (New Delhi, 1991), p

The English Magistrate was the Anglicized equivalent of the Mughal *faujdar* who was also in his glorious days was in charge of the district and its peace and tranquility. The *faujdari* refurbished by Hastings too dispensed justice on a small/petty level even though legally not entitled to such an authority and it also had no-military connotations attached to it like the English Magistrates introduced by the Cornwallis administration.

CORNWALLIS AND THE REVISED BRITISH NOTIONS OF POLICING AND CONTROL

Cornwallis on resuming the charge of administration decided to forge alternative equations in the mechanisms of control and policing. The zamindars had considerably enhanced their hold over the rural society as a result of the introduction of the newly defined *faujdari*. As we saw in the earlier section that the relationship between *faujdar* and the zamindar was far from harmonious, because of such antagonisms the measures of local policing suffered a setback. This is evident in a petition submitted by the Malda *shroffs*, dated 25 April 1779 which indicated.

"we take the liberty humbly to represent (the *shroffs* wrote) that we can never obtain those pykes (*paiks*) and chokeydars (*chaukidar*) that formerly to be allowed us. Whenever our treasure boats stopped and that zamindars plainly tell us, they are not responsible as formerly, that their allowances on such accounts are annulled and that it belongs to the *foujdari* and not to them to give us protection and when we turn to the *foujdari* we perceive no establishment whatsoever in the *mofussil* to preserve us from accidents similar to the one which we have lately experienced".³⁷

In an Inquiry in 1790, the Magistrates were asked to submit reports on rural

³⁷. Basudev Chatterjee, 'The Darogha and the Countryside: The Imposition of Police Control in Bengal and its Impact', *JESHR*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, p24, cf. Governor-General in Council - revenue, vol. 50-51, West Bengal State Archives, Calcutta.

police. The in their replies, they highlighted on the 'villany of zamindars' and *thanadars*. The Magistrates of eastern Bengal, especially of Dacca and Sylhet, confirmed that no dacoits made their depredations without the knowledge and support of the zamindars and their retainers. Finally on 7th December 1793 a regulation was promulgated by which the policing of the country was placed exclusively under the charge of the Magistrates. Regulation XXII of 1793 stripped the zamindars of their traditional policing responsibility and instead empowered the Company. The zamindars were required to discharge their retained militia establishment. Cornwallis' policies to 'demilitarize the zamindars' was in line with the ambition of the British state to monopolise 'legitimate instruments of coercion' in public spheres of authority. It is said that "in every area the British brought under their control, they forced the disbandment of local military forces and systematically destroyed the forts and fortified houses of local controller."³⁸ Under the Burdwan Raj there were considerable number of household troops (who were paid in cash-*nagdian* troops) or retainers whose costs in 1761 was Rs. 33,000 In 1767 the cost of the *nagdian* corp was reduced by the British Government to Rs 8660 and on the eve of the Permanent Settlement it was totally abolished.³⁹ Careful reports and surveys of the zamindari arms, ammunitions, fortified establishment were drawn. By late 18th Century there was a careful estimation of such forces, some of the questions of the Interrogatories circulated by Lord Wellesley, in 1801 amongst the various Judge-Magistrates of Bengal Presidency, enquired about 'Do the inhabitants of the division under your jurisdiction, keep arms in their houses? What discription of arms do they retain ; For what purposes are the arms retained?'

'Are there any brick or mud forts in your division? in what state are the forts and what is the nature of the construction'. Or 'what are the names of the peons possessing the highest rank and greatest opulence in the division subject to your jurisdiction? What numbers of followers, armed or otherwise are they supposed to maintain in their services; and do they appear abroad with such followers armed?'.⁴⁰

^{38.} Bernard S. Cohn, *India : The Social Anthropology of a Civilization*, (New Jersey, 1971) p80.

^{39.} Ratna Lekha Ray, *Change in Bengal Agrarian Society, 1760-1850*, (New Delhi, 1979), p19. Also see, John Mclane, "Revenue Farming and the Zamindari System in Eigtheenth Century Bengal", in R.E. Frykenberg (ed), *Land Tenure and Peasant in South Asia*, (New Delhi, 1977), p20.

Under such early British preceptions of monopolising the means and modes of coercion any public (or even private)⁴¹ display of violence was considered inimical and in competition to the political sovereignty of the developing colonial regime. The various measures to curb the growing authority of local zamindars,⁴² included the measure of the demolition of their forts in various districts. This was done by the way of explaining that 'protection would be on all occasions to be afforded to them by the Government'. *Ikrarnamahs* (consent deeds) were promulgated and signed for definite compliance within specified time period. On one occasion it was reported by a Company Magistrate that,

"I have sent *Parwanah* (superior order) to the proprietors of forts, informing them that I shall arrive in Pergunnah and that if they make any hesitation in delivering up their forts, they will be compelled to do it on my arrival and that exemplary punishment will be inflicted on them for the disobedience".⁴³

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- ^{40.} W.K. Ferminger (ed), *Fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on East India Affairs 1812*, (London, 1828), in three Vols., Vol. I, pp580-639.
- ^{41.} There was the interference of the colonial regime to control violence and coercion in the private spheres is well reflected by the measures of the British administrators like Jonathan Duncan in late 18th Century against the Rajput *Talluqadars* and zamindars for their practices of female infanticide. From Duncan's perspective 'the practice of infanticide nurtured the spirit of *hoormut* (Rajput honour), which made them so ready to take to violence'. It was in the course of a prolonged struggle to make the Rajkumar Rajputs of Jaunpur pay their revenue regularly and peaceably, that Duncan discovered the prevalence of female infanticide amongst them. Radhika Singha, "The privilege of taking life: Some 'anomalies' or the Law of Homicide in the Bengal Presidency", *IESHR*, 30,2 (1993), p192.
- ^{42.} Te rent free lands or the service tennures associated closely to the zamindari establishment belonging to the retained men like the *paiks* were resumed. This had other effects like some rebellions as discussed in chapter three, section II in the context of the local militia.
- ^{43.} From, J. Routledge, Magistrate of Almorah To, Grame Mercer Esq., Secretary to the Hon'ble Lt. Gov. of Ceded District in Oude, L.d. 29 March 1802. In G.N. Saletore (ed), *Henry Wellesley's Correspondence, Selections from English Records No.2*, (Allahbad, 1955), p12.

CORNWALLIS REGULATIONS AND THE 'INTRODUCTION' OF COMPANY DAROGHA

The Magistrates were directed to divide the districts under them into (*Kos*) policing jurisdictions comprising an extent of country not exceeding ten 'Coss' square by the above mentioned regulation.⁴⁴ The guarding of each jurisdiction (*thanas*) was to be committed to a *darogha* with an establishment of *jamadars* and few *barkandazes* to be paid by the Government. The newly constituted Company *darogha* was also recognised as an important agency in maintenance of public order. It was emphasized by the Cornwallis regulations that besides apprehending the notorious dacoits, robbers and other miscreants he shall arrest and sent to the Magistrate "all geedur-mars, malacheas, syr-bejiras or other description of vagrants or 'suspected' persons who may be lurking about his jurisdiction without any ostensible means of subsistence, or who cannot give a satisfactory account of themselves".⁴⁵ The section XII of the regulation XXII, of 1793 also empowered the *darogha* pass sentence, to discharged the defendants in complaints for petty assaults and thefts. He was also permitted to discharge the defendant on certain conditions.⁴⁶

To support the expenses of this establishment the Government decided to levy "police tax" upon the merchants, traders, and shopkeepers. Though no standard assessment was made out by the Cornwallis administration the Magistrates were instructed to collect the tax according to their own wisdom.

REFORM OR REORIENTATION : 'OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLE'

The seemingly reformed situation evolved by the Cornwallis regulations of 1793 was in more than one way an 'old wine in new bottle'. The recently introduced

^{44.} *Regulation and Rules passed by Governor General in Council of India*, Fort William, Vol. I, (Regulations of 1793, 1794, 1795), (London, 1828), NAI, New Delhi, p214.

^{45.} The Regulation XXII Section X of 1793, further went on to describe the role of *Darogha* in cooperation with Magistrates regarding the various suspected Low caste marginalised vagrant population. Accordingly after examining an oath from such people 'disorderly or illdisposed people' and shall employ them in repairing the public roads, or upon any other public work until they find a security for their good behaviour in case of their being discharged (preventive defention).

darogha was the new title for the old agency of *thanadars* of the pre colonial times. These were traditional subaltern policing officers deployed under the Mughal *faujdar* in a district under the Mughals. The retention of the indigenous persian term again is indicative of its traditional value.

PRE-COLONIAL ROOTS OF DAROGHA

It was a persian term comprising of words '*dar*' (limit) and '*agha*' (master/keeper)—*Dar-o-(a)gha*—meaning master or superintendent of a limit. Besides this, another source traces its origin in the culmination of the persian terms '*dar*' with '*nigha*' (watch) as *Dar-o-(ni)gah* or the watcher of a limit.⁴⁷

Under the Mughals *darogha* had watchful functions, though not of general policing but they were assigned to specific administrative department of the state. The terms came to be a descriptive prefix of a person incharge of a particular department for example there were *Darogha-i-dakchauki* (Suprintendent of intelligence and posts), *darogha-i-Topkhana* (superintendent of artillery), *darogha-i-arz-i-Mukarrar* superintendent of service seekers, petitioners and the ensuing confirming orders), even the Imperial mint was under *darogha*. Cornwallis administration brought *darogha* to the rural countryside but its function of superintendence remained the same.

DAROGHA AND THE ZAMINDARS IN LATE 18TH CENTURY

Even with the introduction of the *darogha* into the countryside, the Company administration was not able to curb the considerable might of the zamindars in the local policing and control networks. The local land controllers continued to determine

^{46.} This was when the Complainant shall deliver a *razenamah* (deed of consent) or in writing desiring to withdraw his complaint, also the defendant was supposed to give in writing agreeing to the withdrawal. Such 'negotiating' power provided the *darogha* with a lot of latitude to determine and influence any case under him. This made him susceptible to bribes in case defendant was an influential man. *Darogha* in such cases acted on the defendant's behalf to persuade the complainant.

^{47.} H. Yule and A Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian and Indian words and phrases*, (Rev. edn., London, 1903), p69.

the policing measures of their localities, advantageously minus the responsibility. The zamindars sucked the company *darogha* under their authority and came to influence its local policing abilities. According to Basudev Chatterjee⁴⁸, the indigo planters and the zamindars appointed persons called 'thana mooktears' (*mukhtiars*).⁴⁹ These 'mooktears' settled matters with the *daroghas* on behalf of their principals and an aid levy was paid through them. They were in turn entitled to 10% commission on such bribes paid to the *darogha* to influence his investigations. 'To know that it had been paid, the landlords often sent friends or confidential servants' to enquire.⁵⁰

The local *chaukidars* even though being placed under the *darogha* still owed their appointment and dismissal to the zamindars and not to the *darogha*. Most of them were paid with *chakeran* lands (revenue-free, service tennures) that were controlled in practice by local landholders. This anomaly proved to be a big handicap to the policing abilities of the *darogha*. The *chaukidars* continued to serve the landholders as rent controllers, coolies, messengers and agricultural labourers neglecting their role in *darogha's* establishment. They either failed to give information about dacoits or gave such as would please their principal masters, the zamindars. The Company *darogha* fast came to lose its credibility and reliance as a policing agency. In the Police Commission (1837) Inquiry several witnesses testified that the persons appointed as *daroghas* were ill-equipped to discharge their function honestly and conscientiously, 'with a handful of *chuprassies* (peons), who carried rusty swords they did not know how to use'.⁵¹ The Fifth Report of the Select Committee described the *daroghas* "as insulated individuals... riewed with fear by some with jealousy

48. Basudev Chatterjee, 'the Darogha and the Countryside', *IESHR*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, (1982) p33.

49. *Mukhtiars* - Agents, or representatives.

50. C. Palit, *Tensions in Bengal Rural Society*, (Calcutta, 1975), p75.

51. Basudev Chatterjee, *The Darogah and the Countryside*, *IESHR*, (1982), p33, cf. *The confession of Miajahn, Darogah of Police (Tezpore Thana)*; dictated by him and translated by Mofussilite, (Calcutta, 1969), pp52-53.

by other and neglected by most of the inhabitants." They did not possess "that personal consideration in the public mind, so necessary to aid them"⁵²

The *daroghas* themselves became the subject of surveillance. Practice was initiated of sending to the notions *thanas* a few of the "omedwars" (aspirants) waiting on the Magistrates office as *barkandazes* with orders "to keep a good lookout on the conduct of the *darogah* and to learn the actual amount of dacoities committed and which it had been the custom of the *darogahs* to conceal".⁵³ Other measures included sending a few "goindas"⁵⁴ (Spies) to the suspected *thanas* with instructions to keep a tab on and report the activities of the *darogahs*. It was observed that the 'use of "goinda" is most keenly felt when the *daroghas*, the zamindars or the villagers are suspected of concealing or harbouring the persons to be apprehended'.⁵⁵

CONCLUDING REMARKS

ORIENTALISM VS. ANGLICISM : A REVISED APPROACH

The interface of the indigenous system and colonial order bred lot of complexities. In most historical approaches about this transitional period, orientalist and anglicist

^{52.} John R. Mclane, 'Bengali Bandits, Police and landlords after the Permanent Settlement' In Anand Yang (ed) *Crimie and Criminality in British India*, (Tucson, 1985) pp26-47, (cited on p40) cf. *Fifth Report of the Select Committee*, Vol. I, p74.

^{53.} Basudev Chatterjee, The darogha and the countryside, p33. cf. A.F. Tytler, *Considerations on the present political State of India... intended chiefly as a Manual of Instructions in their duties for the Younger servants of the Company*, (Second Edn., London, 1816) Vol. II p305.

^{54.} *Goindas* - a term for spy or informant made from persian word *guftan*, meaning to inform, tell or speak. It was a pre-colonial agency of the Mughal times.

^{55.} These measures became significant for the British administrators as the first reports sent by the *daroghas* were vague and inconclusive. It was as if they (*darogha*) left the case open, as it were, to allow the parties to come to an understanding with them. The 'sooruthaul' (*surat-o-haal*) or the final report of the *daroghas* were severely criticised in the Police Commission of 1837-1838. it was argued that the Report "is not infrequently drawn up by the police officer, (*daroghas*) suit his own private views, and represents the case, not as it has ocured, but as he is desirous it should appears.... and can never be relied on as a trustworthy representation of facts'. Basudev Chatterjee, The darogha and the Countryside, *IESHR* (1982) p34, cf. Police Commission Report 1837-1838, para. 72, p29.

ideologies of colonial administrators have been pitted against each other (in the sense of competing revision of other's ideas). However this chapter has shown that the measures of Warren Hastings, an orientalist and Lord Cornwallis' measure of Anglicization in the sphere of early colonial policing were not in contrast to each other. For as we have seen that in the setting up of early British institutions there was a distinct confluence of apparently antagonistically placed ideological positions.⁵⁶ Within the mould of continuity with the past reorientation crept in, as we saw in the discussion regarding the resurrection of *faujdari* by the Hastings administration. It was stripped of its military characteristic and emerged as a collaborative institution falling short of its traditional checking fervor. As also a seemingly changed scenario carried with it elements of continuity, as demonstrated by the post-Cornwallis reform regulations in the Bengal countryside. The recently appointed *darogha* languished under the might of the traditional zamindars whose policing responsibilities as an agency it was supposed to inherit.

⁵⁶. Neeladri Bhattacharya questions this problematic of binary opposition between tradition and modernity. He says 'it has been long recognised, a simple inversion with an overemphasis on change'. Neeladri Bhattacharya, 'Remaking Custom: the discourse and practice of colonial codification', In R. Champaklakshmi and S. Gopal (eds), *Tradition, Dissent and Ideology : Essays in Honour of Romilla Thapar*, (New Delhi, 1996), pp20-51. In this article through a discussion of colonial codification of custom, he shows how the discourse of continuity remains significant is legitimizing an carrying through changes within tradition. According to him, in the colonial situation the rhetoric of custom becomes a new language of power and legitimization. But this whole process was a complex exercise where the 'dialect of accomodation and marginalisation, and concurrent tendencies of homogenization and differentiation... characterized the complex history of the fashioning of dominant tradition' p21.

CHAPTER 2

The *Sihbandi* and *Najib* 'Corps': Trends of 'Organised' Early Colonial Agencies of Policing and Control in North India.

INTRODUCTION

During the early British rule certain para - military institutions emerged as proto-types of the post mutiny 'civil' constabulary battalions¹, raised for policing and surveillance duties. Two such institutions that emerged were the *sihbandis* and *najibs*. They were miscellaneously utilised for various duties facilitating the public administration of the recently established colonial regime.

The pre-colonial practice of using militia levies², was in process of transition by the late 18th Century. During this period the levies were being transformed and were emerging as 'semi-militaristic'³ establishments. The *sihbandis* and *najibs* were representative examples of such a transformation. This was significant juncture in their evolutionary journey to become the 'civil' policing constabulary of the late 19th and early 20th Century.

The *sihbandis* and *najibs* were composed of men who were on the peripheries of the military ambit. They were collectively referred as 'irregulars' so as to distinctify

1. David Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial State : Madras (1857- 1947)*, (New Delhi, 1987) p231.

Such had their origins in the post mutiny phase, which saw the reliance on military for internal expansion & control considerably reduced. This phase saw the elevation of policing from a secondary activity comprising of para-military soldiers and revenue peons to the full time responsibility of a separate branch of provincial administration Arnold's work focuses on this phase.

2. As a body of troops or soldiers hurriedly raised as a force arrayed for or actively engaged in some strenuous service primarily for collecting revenue from hostile areas or sometimes a standing support or auxiliaries for the regular army.

3. The term was used by Sir Richard Temple in his article on the Andaman Sebundy Corps. See. R.C Temple, 'John Jones Sebundy Corps', *Calcutta Review*, Oct. 1896. pp388-40.

them from the 'regular' sepoys of the Company army. They acted in dual capacity on one hand acting as local relieving parties for the regular army soldiers acting in auxiliary capacity doing sundry duties on the other hands they were militaristically styled and influenced, emulating in on various stances. ^{3(a)}

These agencies came on to the centre stage of the early British administration because of the early British efforts to abstract the 'military sphere' from the civilian society.⁴ This systematic disassociation of the military was integral to the British notion of civil order. Certain practices came to be particularly fostered by the company army to give it an elitest and distinct identity.⁵ This was used to inspire unquestioned allegiance and awe for the British authority and sovereignty which the army was supposed to uphold.

The introduction of notion of discipline⁶ in the administrative ideology under the British rule was a significant measure, as it entailed that the regulars of the company army had to be relieved of their often relied detached usages on various administrative tasks; to be effectively disciplined for martial duties for the imperialist expansion. Such learnings necessitated the deployment of irregular forces such as *sihbandis* and *najibs* who were considered militarily unworthy and came to operate on the peripheries of the militaristic sphere.

^{3(a)}. These were characterized as 'Irregulars' distinct from regular soldiers of the Co. Army. H. Roberdeau, who has left a sketch of life in Mymensing, in the early 19th Century observed that 'a District Magistrate in Bengal could hardly be expected to have a regular police force. He had, however, a force of two hundred and fifty armed irregulars... They are in general whorthless undisciplined set of scoundrels very different from the regulartroops which are brave, honorable and obidient.' cf. Philip Woodruff, *The Men who Ruled India - The Founders*, Vol. I (London, 1953), p168.

⁴. Seema Alavi, *The Sepoy and the Company : Tradition and Transition in Northern India (1780-1830)*, (New Delhi, 1995) Seema Alavi in her study has emphasised this idea. According to her notion to seperate the military from the civilian society was very strong and integral to British perception of public order in the late 18th and early 19th Century, p294.

⁵. Ibid, (She highlights such examples, as the creation of cantonments, restriction on consumption of spirituous liquour and 'bhang', emphasis on a specific kind of dietary habits only associated with upper castes, creation of lunatic asylums. etc.

⁶. With the colonial rule came the notions of discipline and social colonized population. There was propogation of imprisonment as a significant mechanism of the British penal-logic, this

The need to create the military exclusivity disassociating the company army from the civilian society created the political urgency to have militarily inspired, civil institutions such as *Sihbandis* and *Najibs*. Both of them had indigenous roots and had come into existence much before the British established their rule but the contribution of such agencies was readily relied by their rule for its policing and surveillance needs.

It has been argued that the military was central to the establishment of Company rule and the early British state was the 'garrison' state⁷. This state relied heavily on a huge standing and well disciplined army. There was the rationale that emphasized the precariousness of the rule and demanded that 'its security could only be assured by constant preparedness for war'⁸. This brought the early British administration to discourage strongly the use of regular soldiers in detached parties for policing and surveillance needs. As a result these indigenous agencies were brought on to the forefront of the colonial public administration and came to be extensively used in the internal security and control mechanisms.

By late 18th Century, according to C.A. Bayly, British, Irish and colonial militias were being greatly expanded and these came to play an important role in 'broadening the basis of empire'⁹. Pitt's Militia Act of 1793 began a long process of reorganisation

led to erection of prisons and House of Correction. Garrisoned cantonments and barracks were built to seclude the disciplined army soldiers. Lunatic asylum and their concept of 'Lock' hospitals to treat venereal diseases were all infrastructural symbols of the percolation of such an ideology as a measure for colonial state formation and consolidation.

An illuminating work on this is by Anand A. Yang, 'Disciplining 'Natives' : Prisons and Prisoners in early 19th Century India', *South Asia*, Vol X, 2 (Dec. 1987)pp29-45. Yang elucidates on how the early British of disciplining the colonized 'natives' were inspired by economic utility and political docility of the indigenous populace.

7. Douglas Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon : Colonial armies and the garrison state in early 19th Century India*, (London, 1995), p45.

8. Ibid, Peers in his study demonstrates how important the army was to the establishment and forms of British domination and looks at the direct impact that it exerted on the day to day operation of the British in India. According to him, military imperatives and the army's demands for resources were given priority in peacetime as well as wartime. We have the popular impression of the British Raj being saturated with images and memories of military campaigns.

9. C.A. Bayly, *The Imperial Meridian : The British Empire and the world (1780-1830)*, (London, 1989) As such a body of Irregular militia helped to rally inferior, lower cast groups to the nascent

which reached its peak during the patriotic volunteering movement of 1805-1806.^{9(a)} In India there were efforts to recognise the existing militia levies as provincial battalions of 1804. The local militias of Ireland and Scotland were paralleled by the Irregular 'provincial scratch-forces' in India¹⁰. Bayly observes that such agencies came to absorb predatory warrior groups, mercaneries and the military detritus of the regional polities during the 18th Century. He says that 'plunderers were often set out to catch plunderers' as para-military police¹¹. for instance by early 19th Century the British incorporated belligerent communities of Maghs of eastern Bengal¹², under their rule by organising them into 'Mugh Sebundy Corp'¹³.

colonial empire 'breaking the monopoly of the creole elites on their employment and by loosening the bonds of racial exclusiveness' created for services in the Company army.

^{9 (a)}. It has been estimated that by 1809 roughly one in every 9 or 10 men of military age in Great Britain and Ireland was serving in the forces of the army, navy or regular militia and if we are to include volunteers and local militias in this calculation the proportion rises to about one in six men cf. C.A Bayly, *Imperial Meridian* p2, 11.

¹⁰. C.A. Bayly, *The Imperial Meridian*, pp128-129.

This phrase is used by C.A. Bayly as he argues that this was a global phenomenon that included the colonies under the British empire too. Like on the Cape after 1806, the British began to raise a 'Hottentot Corp' made up of Africans who had been 'accultured' by long exposure to the Dutch and of people of mixed race. In the Caribbean black colonial militia raised during the crisis of the slave revolts after 1793. These were analogous to the process of organising *Sihbandi* and *Najib* battalions in India by late 18th and early 19th Century.

¹¹. This observation is made by C.A. Bayly in *The Imperial Meridian*, p129.

¹². A.C. Roy, *History of Bengal (Mughal period : 1526-1765 A.D.)*, (Calcutta, 1968). p220. The British documents lists them as 'Mugs' which was actually an indigenous term 'magh' which was a Bengali name for Arakanese buddhist. Though there is a controversy. Whether the word 'magh' is of Bengali origin as its precise origins are unclear. But in all certainty it can be said that the word is not Burmese.

Maghs like the portugese pirates constituted a great threat not only to the people of lower Bengal but also to the Mughal government in Bengal for quite a longtime. The Maghs were a symbol of terror and oppression and from time to time they carried out their depredation right into one heart of the Bengal country. For more details see J.M. Ghosh, *Magh raiders of Bengal'* (Calcutta, reprint 1969).

¹³. For an interesting account of the usages of 'Mugh Sebundy' See Indian Political Despatch To Court of Directors, No. 18 of 1830, political consultation (hereafter P.C.) of 16 April No.104, Foreign Dept. Political Branch Records (hereafter FDPBR) at National Archives of India, (hereafter NAI) New Delhi.

Both *sihbandis* and *najibs* were types of soldiery¹⁴. Where as *sihbandi* was a persian term used under the Mughals for the practice of collecting irregular militia utilized in provincial administration under the governor (*subahadar*), *najibs* on the other hands was as specific distinguishing term or title used in the context of the mainstream urban based 'gentlemen troopers' who had dominated the Mughal and then the pre-Buxar Nawabi army of Awadh. The former came to signify a force (of decentralised nature) whose use came to be popularized termendously by the early 18th Century in the wake of the disintegrating Mughal empire; and the latter became the marginalised section of the post-Buxar Nawabi army. This displacement led to its transformation as a institution of administration.

I

SIHBANDIS UNDER THE MUGHALS AND THE REGIONAL STATES

The practice of raising *Sihbandis* as irregular, rudimentary and temporary militia levies had been an old one, and can be traced as far back as early days of Mughal rule. Babur in his memoirs had characterized the Indian levies of Ibrahim Lodi as *Sihbandis*¹⁵. We have evidence for the employment of *Sihbandis* by the Khalisa officials of the Mughal empire even in the 17th Century. The *Subahadar* (the provincial governor) was given a long string of good counsels on his appointment¹⁶. One of which was

¹⁴. Col. W.H. Sleeman even equated both of them while describing Irregular militia used in the Awadh countryside. He said 'The *Nazim* tells us that has entertained, at his owncost. Nujeebs or Seobundies, on the same condition as those on which the others serve...on duty under him—that is, they are to get four rupees a month each and furnish themselves with food, clothing, a matchlock, sword accoutrements and ammunition except on the occasion of actual fighting.' P.D. Reeves (ed), *Sleeman in Oudh : An Abridgement of W.H. Sleeman's A Journey through the kingdom of Oude in 1849-1850*, (Cambridge,1971) pp136-137.

¹⁵. William Irvine, *Army of the Indian Moghuls: Its organisation and administration*, (London, 1903, Indian Reprint New Delhi, 1962).p166.In *Baburnamah* it is termed as 'bedhindi' which is an obvious misreading—says W. Irvine. Its definition is found quoted in *Dastur-ul-Aml* (B.M. 6598 folio 486) as 'armed men entertained by local officers when engaged in collecting revenue' this document belong to reign of Alamgir or Aurangzeb (1658-1707). The word is also found used for local levies by Danishmand Khan Bahadur's *Shahnamah* (entry of the 12th Shaban 1120H = 26 Oct. 1708)

¹⁶. These were god counsels forty in number as to what *subahdars* should do and what he should avoid doing. These are given in Akbar's *farman* found in *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* pp163-170, the translation of it found in Bird's *History of Gujarat* pp389-400. Also see *Ain-i-Akbari* part-II pp37-40. cf. J.N. Sarkar '*Mughal administration*, (Calcutta, 1969)pp69-70.

'get an estimate as to the number of *sihbandi* troops¹⁷ necessary for doing the work of control and administration (*rabt and zabt*)¹⁸.

Even the collector of revenue called *Krori* was counseled that they 'ought to entertain a body of militia (*sihbandi*) proportionate to his jurisdiction and collect the revenue without negligence and at the right-time¹⁹.

By 18th Century in the wake of the crisis of weakening Mughal authority and the strengthening forces of regional polities, there was the rise of local land controller and practice of contractual revenue farming, which further led to popularization of *sihbandi* as an agency of provincial administration and control. Since then, besides its official usage *sihbandi* came to be relied upon by such emergent forces like the *Ijaradars*, *ta'alluqadar*, *gomashtas* of big merchants and bankers.

The practice of raising temporary levies (*Sihbandi*) was widely resorted to when the regular contingents of the *Mansabdars* began to breakup.²⁰ So under such circumstances armed men were hired or 'entertained' for the occasion by the local officials for enforcing the tottering revenue collection.²¹

The problems of the realization of revenue from the assigned *jagirs* by *jagirdars* and their resistance to this had intensified during the course of the 17th Century, Muzaffar Alam says that even during the reign of Akbar the *jagirdars* were not

17. 'troops' was used as in a militaristic nature but these were characterized as 'irregulars' employed to assist in revenue collection and other administrative tasks like an auxiliary armed force.

18. '*rabt*' meaning control and *zabt* means administration cf. J.N. Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p71.

19. In *Hedayat-ul-Qawa'id*, p66 cf. J.N. Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p72.

20. Muzaffar Alam, *Crisis of the Empire in Mughal North India : Awadh and Punjab (1707-1748)*, (New Delhi, 1986) p36 cf. Kushal Chand, *Nadir-uz-Zamani*, a useful Persian document on general history up to 1735, pp373-374.

21. Ibid, according to M. Alam *Sihbandi* was the term used for armed men who were hired for the occasion by local officials and *ijaradars* (revenue farmers) for enforcing revenue collections. These men were to be distinguished from the imperial troops permanently employed as the regular contingents of the mansabdars. Alam opines that the practice of *Sihbandi* was an old one.

expected to realize in full the revenue assigned against their mansab²². But with the measures such as the rules of proportions²³ and montly scale²⁴ the uneasy relationship between paper and practice became evident.

During the 18th Century this difference between the *jama* and the *hasil* had a close bearing on the *jagirdar's* ability or inability to mobilize strength to collect the revenue. Muzaffar Alam notes that even though in some regions of the empire, the actual yield increased but this was without a corresponding rise in the *jama* figures (as in the case of Awadh Subah) and proved to be for the obvious advantage of the intermediaries (eg. the *Zamindars*, *ta'alluqadar*) who steadily gained power resulting in the increase in number and magnitude their potential for resistance to the mughal *Jagirdar*. They started enlisting number of private retainers and militia to secure their property from infiltration. On the other hand the *Jagirdar's* military prowess had declined following the reforms in the *Mansabdari* and *Jagirdari* system in the 17th Century. With the rise in the strength of the intermediaries their position further weakened and they were in greater need of help to salvage their interest in the scenario of coercive collections of revenue, rural resistance and uprisings from various sections of the agrarian populace, natural famine situation and numerous skirmishes and clashes.

22. Ibid, As in Akbar's reign the Jagir systems was initiated and since its inception the jagirdars encountered difficulties in realisation of revenue from their jagirs at the assessed rates. Alam says that might be because of the tendency of the exchequer to assess the revenue yields at an inflated rate and this tendency also thrived on the jagirdar's urge to have a large income even if on paper commensurate with their status. The jama-hasil gap widened during the course of 17th Century. This was also affected by the additional influx of the bullion and subsequent price rise for (specially for the food grains). For arguments on this perspective see Irfan Habib, 'The mansab system 1595-1637' Proceeding of *Indian History Congress*, 29th session, Patiala 1967 pp221-242.

23. Rules of Proportion- Under this rule Shahjahan scaled down the obligation of the mansabdar's according to the location of his *jagir* and the place of service, so they needed to furnish only 1/3rd, 1/4th and 1/5th of his *sawar* rank.

24. Monthly Scales-This was a devise to express ration between jama and hasil. It recognised the inevitability of differece between *jama* (assessed revenue) and hasil (the actual collections). Hence it classified *jagirs* on the basis of hasil into eight months *jagirs* or six months i.e. *jagirs* income from a *jagir* assigned for one year actually yielded a revenue equal to what was expected in eight months or six months instead of twelve months.

The Central Government failed to provide adequate military assistance to the *jagirdar* and even the institution of *faujdar* was getting ineffective²⁵ (and fast losing its identity from the inability of the provincial administration to keep order and enforce revenue collections).

Holders of larger *jagirs*, found that in absence of any effective support from the governor they were forced to employ number of temporary troops to assist their agents in making collections. This frequently consumed much of the funds collected which were supposed to be used to support cavalry contingents actually on duty with the *mansabdar*. It became impossible for them to make payments in time to their contingents²⁶. The regular contingents of mansabdar maintained by his jagir began to proliferate. The practice of having smaller and irregular units of militia retained in one or more companies became popular (throughout the Mughal empire).

Many *jagirdars* also discovered that they were acting as *faujdar*s without having the authority to do so²⁷. Such a situation resulted in a series of requests by them for formal authority from the emperor to act as *faujdar* over their assigned lands. This led them to hire sufficient temporary troops (*Sihbandi*) to keep order²⁸.

25. This has been discussed in detail in the 1st chapter but for an elaborate account see M. Alam, *Crisis of the empire*, pp26,27,73,190,210,214,226, 265 and also J.F. Richards, *the Mughal Administration in Golconda*, pp110-111, 196-197, 217.

26. Muzaffar Alam, *Crisis of Empire*, To tackle such a situation Iutfullah Khan Sadiq (diwan-i-tan) decided to distribute fixed and uniform cash sum of Rs. 50 to the *sawars* (horsemen) in the zat rank of 200 to 900. (both when at home or at an expedition). But the sum proved to be insufficient to both prepare for fighting and maintain the expenses of the family (at a time of rising prices of food grains) p36.

27. J.F Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*, There were steady series of requests from *Jagirdars* all over the Mughal empire for fiscal relief as well as for formal authority from the emperor to act as *faujdar*s over their assignments for example. Sar Buland Khan who had his jagir in Koilkonda district in Hyderabad complained that the incumbent *faujdar* was tyrannous, and since the emperor had not designated a regularly appointed *faujdar* for the area, the governor had given an irregular sanad to the other *jagirdar* in the *pargana*. This had authorised him to act as *faujdar* over the immediate area. Sar Buland Khan asked to be appointed as *faujdar* over his *jagir*, p197.

28. *Ibid*, Sar Buland Khan, hired *Sihbandi* to maintained order in the absence of an effective *faujdar*.

It came into vogue to entertain militia help in strenuous circumstances. But by early 18th Century it had been primarily for facilitating the collection of revenue (and other assessed dues) and also safely guarding it to the collectors treasury.

SIHBANDI UNDER THE COMPANY RULE

By the late 18th Century with the establishment of company rule the range of *Sihbandi* activities was expanded by the early British administrators. It also came to ensure the commercial (trading) networks of the Company state besides its fiscal channels. In this period *Sihbandis* emerged as an establishment in its own right at the periphery of the Company army. It was to supplement the local policing agencies such as the *chaukidars*, *paiks*²⁹, *ghatwals*³⁰ etc. *Sihbandi* was categorically denied the militaristic status and was required to be distant from the regulars of the Company army. There were attempts to organise and shape the *sihbandi* as a para-military force ambivalently located between the civil and the military spheres, this indicated of its growing significance in the process of state formation. By late 18th Century as an agency it was metamorphosing as the predecessor of the late 19th and early 20th Century's reformed civil police constabulary battalions.

Under the early British administration it made the journey from *sihbandis* to 'Sebundy' Corp' which were organised into Provincial Battalions. Varied phrase were used in the context of *sihbandis* and they bring out the confusions of the early British perceptions in classifying the indigenous policing institutions and constituting the administrative interface between the civil and military spheres. For instance *Sihbandis*

²⁹. *Paiks* were irregular footmen employed in various capacities as labourers, peons, escorts and guards.

³⁰. *Ghatwals* were keepers of '*ghats*' or passes, a ferryman or a person incharge of a landing place or a mountain pass. The term was also applied to a member of a class of landholders in Birbhum, Bengal holding lands under tennure called the '*ghatwali*' lands, '*ghatwali zamin*' or '*ghatwali mahal*'. These tennures were held by virtue of the office as *ghatwal* and were either rentfree or at low rates of assessment. In Birbhum the lands came to be granted at fixed rates of assessments in perpetuity to the holders and their descendents. These were slowly converted into patrimonial states no longer apparently connected with the performance of any particular duty.

See an account of these such in W.H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue terms of British India*, Calcutta 1940).p

were variously referred to as 'sepoy police officers', 'civil corp', 'Sebundy' sepoy, 'Diwani Sepoys', 'militia corp' etc. In an era of imperialist expansion such an agency was constantly defined in militaristic parlances but at the same time denied a military status.

BRITISH DEFINITION OF *SIHBANDI*

The term was variously defined by several English scholars and administrators. We have Brown³¹, calling it 'irregular infantry, militia, rangers and armed peons', Jobson³², describes it as 'soldiers employed in collecting revenue as an establishment', Forbes³³, designated it as a militia soldier employed in collecting revenue. One source stressing etymologically describes its origin in '*sipah*' (soldiers) and '*bandi*' (recruitment in Persian)³⁴. Hobson-Jobson say that the word was applied to the nature of soldiery or militia imperfectly disciplined troops for revenue or police duties.

The term came to have more than one connotation. Fallon³⁵ gives us '*sih*' (three in Persian). Firstly it was used to describe a 'quarterly payment', as highlighted by popular Hindawi phrase '*Kaho unkee (ya) han ki sihbandi bat gai?*'— in the sense of a tribute. Secondly for a militia soldier employed in collecting revenue or on

31. Brown, *Dictionary of mixed Telugu*, (Madras, 1852.) He gives 'Sibbandi' as the Telugu spelling and 'Sibandi' as the Hindustani spelling cf. R.C. Temple, 'John Jones Sebundy corps', *Calcutta Review*, (Oct. 1896) p396.

32. Ibid, cf. Hobson-Jobson, *Persian Dictionary*, (London, 1852). They says that the rationale behind the word is obscure but its is applied to an irregular native soldiery. Also see Whitworth's, *Anglo-Indian-i-Dictionary*, (London, 1885) who also describes it in similar parlance.

33. Ibid, cf. Forbes '*Hindustani Dictionary*', (London, 1857). denotes *Sihbandi* in a singular connotation he called it 'a militia soldier employed in collecting revenue'.

34. Ibid, *Madras Manual of Administration*, vol-III, (Madras 1893) in the glossary under sipah (soldier) is to be found 'Sibbundy' made up from 'sipah' and 'bandi', Ibid, p397.

35. Ibid, cf. R. Temple, 'John Jones Sebundy Corp', p399. Fallon who was called the 'master of colloquialism', describes this in his *Hindustani Dictionary*, (London 1879).

miscellaneous policing duties. Thirdly for charges in the revenue accounts for the maintainance of such troops '*Sihbandi Ughana*, to levy or collect quarterly payments in lieu.

VARIEGATED DUTIES OF 'SEBUNDY CORPS'³⁶

As an agency of public administration *sihbandi* became vital to the British administrative setup as a sort of reserve security pool for miscellaneous civil duties ranging from revenue collection, court house guarding to arresting parties, escort services and warehouse vigilance. These were placed under the judicial, commercial and revenue departments and looked after a series of activities for the developing colonial regime for which 'regular sepoy' could not be spared upon³⁷.

Among the existing reference to them in the official records we find them guarding 'Cutcherries' (Courts), jails, '*golahs*'³⁸, '*aurungs*',^{38(a)} local public treasuries, public offices, persian records office, mints, opium godowns, salt factories and offices etc. Besides these policing and surveillance duties they assisted in the collection of revenue and other state dues, protecting the '*molungees*'³⁹ (*malangis*) from tigers during the

^{36.} 'Sebundy' - This was the British corruption of the original persian term *Sihbandi*. I have retained this British usage in various places to convey its transformation under the early colonial rule as an institution more emphatically. This English parlance was amongst various other corruptions for example like. 'Sibbendies', 'Seobundies', 'Sirbandi', 'Sybundees', and 'Sibundy'. But the predominant recurrence of 'Sebundy' made me retain it as the 'official' English corruption of an indigenous term.

^{37.} They were placed under District Collectors, Judge - Magistrates, Residents (for the detailed enlistment of some collected figures see the Appendix No.1,2,3).

^{38.} *Golah* Were stores for keeping manufactured goods and food grains for sale and transactions.

^{38 (a).} *Aurungs* - It was a Persian word for a place where any article of trade is manufactured and collected for wholesale disposal or export. In the Company's commercial network these were used as factores for price goods.

^{39.} *Malangis* - Salt makers, workers and labourers employed in manufacturing salt.

voiling season⁴⁰, securing government officials like Judges on circuit tours, they also helped in catching 'daring offenders' by going on their trail^{40(a)}, besides fortifying *thanas* and other posts. Such 'continual services' were specially identified with the *Sihbandis* 'to preserve good order and tranquility throughout the district'⁴¹. They were also detached with 'gun boats to keep the unsettled and refractory ... in subjection'⁴². An interesting correspondence with regard to their functions appreciatively highlighted that

"they (*Sihbandis*) guard the presidencies of their chiefs and collectors of the public revenue, the factories of trade and courts of justice. They are sufficiently useful as escorts for the treasure of both (commercial and revenue) Departments and for the goods of the investments and equally to the suppression of common revolts and the apprehension of the most formidable bands of robbers, men of Eastern division of the Province (of Bengal) which has been from the time immemorial in the habits of mutual depredations"⁴³.

- ⁴⁰. From, R. Gohlad, Salt Agent, Barripore 'Catcherry', To Governor General in Council, Fort William, letter dated (hereafter L.d.) 25 August 1795, Military Department Proceedings (hereafter MDP), dated 14th December, 1795, NAI, New Delhi. Their association with salt manufacturing factories and Salt Department gave 'sebundy corp' the title of 'Salt Corp' too.
- ^{40(a)}. Mr. Parr, the magistrate of Dinajpur, reported of the depredations of *fakirs* under the leadership of Sohan Ali on the police *thana* of 'Keithloul' (Khetlal now in Bogra district) about 18 Kos to the South East of Dinajpur on the border of Rajshahi. He said that 'on 28th Feb, the *darogha* of 'Keithloul' having received information about two of the *sirdars* of the (*fakir*) gang with several accomplices had assembled in the village Byrencha in *zillah* Rajshahi proceeded with a party of 'seobandies' to apprehend these daring offenders'. For an elaboration of this incident see J.M. Ghosh, *Sanyasis and Fakir Raiders in Bengal*, (Calcutta, 1930), p135.
- ⁴¹. From J. Tombelle, Secretary to the Government, Fort William To J. Adams Esq., Collector of Gorakhpur, dated 28th June 1808. In G.N. Saletore (Ed.), *Henry Wellesley's Correspondence* (Published), U.P. State Government Records, Series No.2, NAI, (New Delhi, 1969) p90.
- ⁴². Governor General Minutes on the reorganisation of 'Sebundy Corp for Lower Assam 'FDPBR, PC, dated 19th February 1835, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁴³. Extract of a Revenue Letter from Bengal, signed by Warren Hastings, Hon'ble Governor General, Fort William, dated 28th October 1783, Bengal Revenue Consultations, (hereafter BRC) India Office Library Records (hereafter IOLR), London. The Correspondence further goes on to mention an incident 'when a numerous body of frantic bigots whom a fake zeal for their religion had already steeped in blood, (were) defected, dispersed and reduced to a state of permanent submission by the Collector of Sylhet at the head of an army composed of thirty - forty of militia'.

The role and duties *sihbandis* in the internal administration assumed a significant position as the employment of regular soldiers of the Company army on internal civil duties of the various districts and provinces was very emphatically discouraged repeatedly by the early British administration. The official correspondence is replete with numerous instructions in this regard on various accounts; it was felt that,

"the employment of the regular troops in the detailed provincial duties is pregnant with evils of a most serious nature, that ... essentially injures the discipline of the army, which it is impossible to preserve whilst the troops are thus detached and the army in consequence of this practice can never be deemed complete in point of numbers that when the regular troops are required for service"⁴⁴.

Furthermore it was emphasised that,

"the detachments cannot be recalled without risk and danger that the native troops acquire from its unmilitary habits and sentiments that even the health of the native troops is injured by it and that whilst the practice continues the company have not an effective army"⁴⁵.

Such duties that needed constant detachments of parties to varied places came to be recognised with agencies like 'Sebundy Corps' and 'tomans of Nujeebs'.^{45 (a)} The need to distinctify them proved vital in their evolution under the British regime. It initiated various organising measures like the introduction of notion of discipline, through physical training, drill parades, practices of keeping records of attendance.

⁴⁴. Extract of a Revenue Letter from Bengal, signed by Warren Hastings, Hon'ble Governor General of India, dated 28th October 1783, BRC (Sept - Dec.), 1783, IOLR, London.

⁴⁵. Ibid.

^{45 (a)}. 'Toman' - is the anglicized usage of the indigenous word *tuman* which was a unit of 100 men, 12 of which made a *paltan*. These *tumans* were under the charge of *tumandars*. 'Nujeeb' is the British usage of the traditional persian title *najib* or noble.

Then steps were taken to provide the Corp with uniform dress that was different from that of a regular army soldier and also there was the attachment of services of a 'native civil surgeon' to their establishment.

EARLY BRITISH EFFORTS TOWARDS 'ORGANISATION' OF *SIHBANDIS*: THE NEED FOR DUAL DISTINCTION.

Sihbandi with its roots in pre-colonial times came to be popularly utilised under contemporary regional polities outside the British rule. In this regard it was observed that,

"every state from Cape Comorin to Cashmere has its Seebundy appointed for same purposes as ours but variously composed of footmen armed indiscriminately with boxes, lances, swords, matchlocks and bamboos and a few ill appointed horsemen for show intermixed"⁴⁶

as a result early British administration strived to transform its *sihbandis* in order to distinctify them from 'the militia of the country' that was believed to be 'motley'⁴⁷.

Besides this, the British also felt a very strong need to differentiate the *sihbandis* in the Company territory from the 'high culture' of the regulars of the Company army. Seema Alavi has emphasized that this notion to separate the military from the civilian society was very strong and integral part of the early British perceptions of public order. During this period, she says that "the Company had always hoped to abstract the military world from the civilian society" for "this military distinctiveness which

^{46.} Ibid, there are numerous accounts of *Sihbandis* under the contemporary regional polities. See Sir R.C. Temple gives a comprehensive account of *Sihbandis* in the context of South India in his article, 'John Jones Seebundy Corps', *Calcutta Review*, October 1896 (Supra note 3). For a description of indigenous roots of *Sihbandis* in Western India See A.K. Forbes, *Rasmala: Or Hindoo Annals of the province of Goozerat in Western India*, 2 VOLS. (London, 1856) Vol.II, Chapter V on *Mulkgiri* expeditions, p49. For the deployment of irregular militia in early 18th Century at Bombay Presidency, See S.M. Edwards, *The Bombay City Police: A Historical Sketch (1672 - 1910)* (London, 1960) p.4. The 1st Chapter of this work discusses the early policing, experiments in Bombay through '*Bhandari* Militia'.

^{47.} Extract of a Revenue letter from Bengal, signed by Warren Hastings the Hon'ble Governor General, Fort William, dated 28th October 1783, BRC (Sept. - Dec.) 1783, IOLR, London.

it attempted to construct suited the political interest of the Company"⁴⁸. Measures like drill parades, emphasizing physical training and discipline were designed to such goals.

Such perceptions of colonialists posed a challenge for the need of dual distinction which led the British to make efforts towards the organisation of its irregular militia reserves, which in turn considerably contributed to the development of *sihbandis* as the forerunners of the 'civil' police constabulary of later times.

Under the early British rule there were constant complaints about the contemporary usages of 'Sebundy' under other polities outside the Company's ambit. There were criticism for its 'extra ordinary' use under regional rulers as a front for fraudulent exactions. Edmund Burke in his speech on the debts of Nawab of Arcot pointed out that,

"One considerable charge upon Nabob's country was for extra ordinary Sibbendies Sepoys and horsemen, who appeared to us to be very unnecessary incumbrance on the revenue"⁴⁹

Many of such existing levies were enlisted by the Company, for its services and the rest were disbanded. This was 'to relieve the country of a heavy burthen (burden)', as it was believed that such charges were 'not only rated much higher but had been blended under one confused and almost unintelligible title as 'expenses of the district', so joined perhaps to afford pleas and means of secreting and appropriating great part of the revenue to other purposes fairly appeared and certainly betraying the utmost neglect and mismanagement as giving latitude for every species of fraud and oppression'⁵⁰.

⁴⁸. Seema Alavi, *The Sepoy and the Company*, p.294

⁴⁹. For the Speech on the debts of Nawab of Arcot, dated 28th Feb. 1785, See P.J Marshall (ed), *Speeches and writings of Edmund Burke: Madras and Bengal (1774-1785)* General Editor of the series, Paul Langford, (Oxford, 1986) p.359.

⁵⁰. Ibid, In this regard referring to the violence of *amildar* he says that 'they are so astonishing.....with

By 1783, there had been an elaborate plan for the need to reform the inherited militia levies even though it was expressly rejected by the Governor General in Council on the criteria of 'mistaken assumptions' on the use and design of such an establishment. It raised some important concerns and issues for the consideration that the early British administrators toyed with.

The proposed plan suggested that the 'Sebundy Corp' to be subjected to military law and the officers commanding to be authorised to assemble and approve regimental court martial for punishment of crimes which were not capital; also that no detachment be made from them and these companies (raised provincially) should be in collective state except only when they may be required on special and actual service that too commanding officers of 'Sebundy Corp' shall be on no account of his own authority detach any Sepoy either singularly or in parties beyond their quarters upon any service except at the requisition in writing of the Committee of Revenue or Collector of the Station and so on⁵¹.

The Plan was anomalous in nature as it conceptually equated the 'Sebundy Corp.' with a military establishment inspite of stating that such an agency was intended for local and particular purposes and was 'not to be considered as a part of the general military establishment'⁵².

whosoever the *amildar* finds a single measure of *natchinee* (a common grain in South India) or rice, he takes it away from him and appropriates it to the expenses of Sebundy (revenue sepoy) that the keeps up', pp614-615.

⁵¹. Letter from the Committee of Revenue to the Hon'ble Warren Hastings Esq., the Governor General in council of Revenue at Fort William, dated 12th August 1783, BRC (June - Aug.) 1783, IOLR, London.

⁵². Ibid, Nor were they to be borne upon the strength of returns of the Army or included in the military accounts. The proposed 'Sebundy Corp' was to be attached to the Revenue Department but like in the case of the army it was proposed that the 'Sebundy Corp' was to be kept as 'entire' as possible and no detachments was to be made from them except only when they may be required on special and actual services. This was very unlikely for the nature of tasks and duties associated with *Sihbandis* required frequent detachments' on mobile services.

The Governor General in his rejection note, not only objected to the proposal but also brought out the late 18th Century British estimation of the 'Sebundy Corp'. The rejection was on its false inferences as it supposedly equated the "the Sebundee to a regular disciplined body of soldiers appointed for protection of country against invasion". It was felt that every part of this description was 'inapplicable', as the Governor General felt that *Sihbandis* "were not soldiers, they are of course unfit for the protection of the country against invasion"⁵³. He went on to say that

"they are by their institution the natural subjects of the province entertained for maintenance of peace of the district to which they are the natives and for the inured coercion of the public within the bounds of their obedience to the authority of the Government"⁵⁴.

Thus the critique of the Governor General in effect defined irregular corps such as *Sihbandis* vis-a-vis the the regular corps of the army and identified the gap between the military and the civil spheres.

For instance, the protective role of a regular soldier and that of an irregular one was distinguished in a bid to give them both a separate identity. Irregulars were 'entertained' and 'disbanded' whereas the regulars were 'enlisted' and 'discharged'. There were no provisions for pensions, forlough, 'batta'⁵⁵ for the militia irregular levies even though they were recognised as performing their 'duties for the state'.

RECRUITING THE *SIHBANDI* : COMPANY SHAPES ITS POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY

Such an 'establishment' was significantly reared as a 'coercive' institution⁵⁶ to foster and support the developing colonial rule. But inspite of being coercive

⁵³. An Extract from a Revenue letter from Bengal, signed by Hon'ble Warren Hastings, the Governor General, Fort William, dated 28th October 1783, BRC (Sept.- Dec.) 1783, IOLR, London.

⁵⁴. Ibid.

⁵⁵. *Batta* - rate of exchange in pay scale when on military service outside the British territories.

⁵⁶. These institutions helped the burgeoning colonial state to control the indigenous population and

in nature unlike the army its aggressiveness was much more carefully highlighted and subtly manipulated. Such a regular forces were not heavily armed, not elitest in nature, did not conform to high caste criteria for the recruits and were predominantly composed of depressed vagrant low caste marginal communities at the dredges of the social structure. These came to formulate such 'provincial scratch - forces' that absorbed the offensive drives of such suspect groups and channelised it to cater to the needs of developing colonial networks of control and order.

'Sebundy Corps' were reflected as para-military 'policing' bands with an underlined 'civilian' status. On their being composed of 'local' indigenous groups, their use of 'coercive' force for public order was considered much diluted than the use of the Company army. It was felt that the "employment of military gave an idea of harsh and dangerous coercion"⁵⁷.

UNIFORMS FOR *SIHBANDIS*.

The issue of uniform for the *Sihbandis* under the Company territory was related to the idea of separating the people of civil society and incorporating them into colonial enclaves; yet creating a hierarchy of those encompassed by the state. Hence the measure for "each of them (*Sihbandis*) to be clothed in a uniform dress of a colour ... to be approved by Governor General"⁵⁸ was a significant one. It was primarily initiated as 'every person of property in the country was under the *necessity*

helped the state to monopolize the authority to inflict legitimized violence and coercion on the pretence to maintain 'order'. These institutions included the army, the irregular militia and the localised agencies of policing and control like the *Darogha*, *Thanadar*, *Barkandazes* and *Chaukidar*. The phrase 'coercive institutions' has been taken from an illuminating article by Paul Rock, "Law, Order and Power in Late Seventeenth and early eighteenth century England", in Andrew Scull and Stanley Cohen (eds), *Social Control and the State*, (London, 1983) pp 191-219.

⁵⁷. From, the Collector of Moradabad to Thomas Graham Esq., Acting President and members of Board of Revenue, L.D. 8 June 1804, Bengal Revenue Board of Commissioners Ceded and Conquered Provinces, Volume dated 6th April-26th June 1804, P/20/42, IOLR, London.

⁵⁸. ... 'but different from sepoy's to be provided by a portion of their pay to be assigned for that purpose'. From the Secretary to the Government of India To Hon'ble Sir John Shore, Governor General of India, Fort William, 29th June 1795, Military Department Proceedings (MDP), 29th June 1795, No.1(a), NAI, New Delhi.

of keeping gúards for its protection"⁵⁹ and it was felt necessary by the administrators to issue the Company's *sihbandis* a uniform to distinctify them from the rest.

The minute of 11th Oct. 1785 was related to the first clothing of the 'Sebundy Corps'. It was to be furnished at the expense of the Company by their respective commanding officers.

This uniform dress was to be approved by the Governor General and was to be different from that of the regular Sepoys of the Company army. But later on it became a norm in practice to deduct a portion out of the *Sihbandi* pay to furnish for such an attire"⁶⁰.

By 1795 it was decided that an Agent will be appointed at the Presidency to make up and prepare the 'cloathing of the Sebundy Crop' (Sic.) and to dispatch it annually to the different stations. He was to be allowed to draw the portions

⁵⁹. "and they have been generally dressed in Redcoats with facings the colour of the coat has been esteemed the most essential part of the dress and carried more authority with it as it cannot be supposed that the inhabitants can discriminate between the uniform of the Company troops". The above order was for the discontinuance of such practices. From, W.F. Edmonston, Board of Trade, Fort William To, Edward Hay, Esq., secretary to the Government, Ld. 13th July 1790, MDP, dated 14th July 1790, NAI, New Delhi.

⁶⁰. "The rates of deduction from their pay in *Sonat* Rupees were fixed as indicated

| Rank | Neat Pay | Clothing | Total |
|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| Jemadar | 15.00 | 1.00 | 16.00 |
| Havildar | 9.00 | 0.12 | 9.12 |
| Naick | 7.00 | 0.10 | 7.10 |
| Privates | 4.80 | 0.08 | 5.00 |

Signed

J.H. Harrington

Sub. Secretary to the Govt. of India

Fort William.

of each man's pay that was assigned for the clothing. The saving upon which were to constitute the compensation to defray all the charges of transportation, package and as well to cover all the risks of river transportation. It was stated that the Government in any case should not be subjected to any additional charge on the account of the clothing of *sihbandis*.⁶¹ The uniforms were made up of "green cloth faced with red"⁶² in *lucca* cloth and were "sufficiently distinguished from all the (uniforms of) the regular corps"⁶³.

Such a move contributed significantly in organising them as a force but there continued to be some objections and complaints regarding this measure. As it was felt that the "Soldiers clothed in green" came to be recognised as "being of an inferior order knowing that the regular army Sepoys are clothed in red, and even the natives considered their green coats as a mark of their being held in a lower degree of estimation than their brethren of the regular services"⁶⁴.

^{61.} From, Edward Hay Esq., Secretary to the Government, Fort William, To the Hon'ble Sir John Shore, Governor General of India, Fort William, Ld. 29th June 1795, MDP, Vol. 29th June 1795, No1(b), NAI, New Delhi.

^{62.} Although this was the original decision but later on due to the limitation of procurement of a large quantity of Green cloth, the Agent of Clothing for 'Sebundy Corp' forwarded a plan for alteration in the uniform. Instead, the jackets of 'Sebundy' were to be made of red cloth faced with green. From, H. Cornish, the Agent of Clothing for the 'Sebundy Corp', To G.H. Barlow Esq., Chief Secretary to the Government, Fort William, Ld. 14th June 1800, MDP dated 19th June 1800, No.52, NAI, New Delhi.

Furthermore, in the context of South India, R.C. Temple mentions that on 18th Feb. 1859, the Madras Government, decided that the full dress of *Sihbandis* will be of dark blue cloth made up not like the tunic but as the 'native Ungreekah' (*angrakha*) and set it off with red pipping. The underdress clothing was to be entirely of *Khaki* (earthy yellow). R.C. Temple, 'John Jones Sebundy Corp', p401 (Supra note3).

^{63.} From, H. Cornish, the Agent for Clothing of 'Sebundy Corp', To, the Hon'ble Governor General in Council, Fort William, Ld. 22nd Oct. 1795, MDP, dated 26th Oct. 1795, NAI, New Delhi.

^{64.} From A. Bogle, Officiating Magistrate, Magistrate's Office, North East Rungpur. To, Robertson Esq., Agent to the Governor General, North Eastern Frontier, FDPBR, dated 5th Nov. 1832, No.48, NAI, New Delhi.

There was conscious enforcement of a "difference in pay between Sebundy and regular Sepoys" which was actually conceived to "make the (service in) the Company army more popular and sought after"⁶⁵.

Even with repeated assertion on "the Sebundy Corp being a civil establishment ... substituted in lieu of regular troops"⁶⁶ to consciously discern *Sihbandis* from the regular Sepoys such an agency continued to exist in a predominantly militaristic ideology of rule⁶⁷. Under the 'Anglo-Indian militarism' ⁶⁸ there was a penetration of military values in the civilian society. 'There was a blurring of boundary between civil and military sphere of authority seen most clearly in the use of military officers in many civilian posts'⁶⁹, of which the commands 'Sebundy Corps' were most popular. With such interation *Sihbandi* came to have para-military nature. But this interlinkage was more on an inspirational plane for better organisation and control. Under the early British rule *Sihbandis* came to have 'semi-militaristic' paradigms.

Both *Sihbandis* and *najibs* were organised in militaristic structure and were commanded by English Commanding Officers (of the rank of Captain) who reported to the Political agents of the Company in various provinces. It was felt that being

⁶⁵. From a Minute Cum Resolution of the Governor General in Council, signed by I.H. Harrington, Sub. Secretary to the Government, Fort William, MDP dated 29th June 1795, NAI, New Delhi.

⁶⁶. From, J. Collins, Town Major, Calcutta To, H. Cornish, the Agent of Clothing for 'Sebundy Corp', Fort William, Ld. 2nd Dec. 1795, MDP Vol. dated 7th Dec. 1795, No.71, NAI, New Delhi. In a proposed plan for the organisation of a 'civil police establishment' for Assam 'Sebundies' were described as the nucleus of a 'civil police corp' to be constituted for the purpose. Letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, To the Secretary to the Government of India, FDPBR, Federal Consultations (F.C.) dated 28th Sept 1844 No.8(a), NAI, New Delhi.

⁶⁷. *Douglas M. Peers, Between Mars and Mammon*, mentions that the emphasis placed by the early colonial state on monopolising the means of coercion in India and ensuring the stability and security of British rule, made the Imperial army the focus of its attention. There was an overwhelming centrality accorded to the army within the Anglo-Indian body politic. It played a significant role in the establishment and form of British domination in India, pviii.

⁶⁸. Ibid, p45, This is discussed in the first chapter.

⁶⁹. Ibid, Soldiers and Civilians were united by the truism that British rule could only be retained by sword.

under the command of 'old officers' of the army "would greatly add to their efficiency"⁷⁰. Besides this, the rank and file of these irregular militias was typically in the structure of a military platoon. Sepoys or 'privates' of *sihbandis* and the *najibs* were commanded by a chain of *jamadars*⁷¹, *havalgars*⁷² and *naiks*⁷³.

But even as the military encompassed the civilian society through its links with the establishment of *sihbandi*, it tried to retain its exclusivity. This was amply reflected by the Invalid establishment of the company army and its association with the Company *sihbandis*. The invalid establishment was a measure by which the retired or discharged (defunct or wounded) soldiers were settled in civilian society. But in this assimilation the company strove to maintain the military superiority for its Invalid Thanah (Station), which while being in the civil surroundings was separated from it by being outside the jurisdiction of civil administration and local law force. Seema Alavi in her study of the Invalid Sepoys points out 'the cautions policy' of settling them in 'the civilian society together with attempting to create a distinct and privileged status for them'⁷⁴.

^{70.} Governor General Minutes on the Reorganisation of the 'Sebundy Corp for Lower Assam', FDPBR, Political Consultations (P.C.), dated 19th February 1835, NAI, New Delhi.

^{71.} *Jamadar* - Chief or Leader of any number of persons, an officer of police, custom or army. The term had a militaristic origin but was used beyond it. In its militaristic connotation he was a 2nd ranking official in the infantry below the *Subahdar* and in cavalry next to *Risaladar*.

^{72.} *Havalgar* - The term is made from Arabic word *havalah* meaning charge, unified with the Persian term *dar* meaning holder. The term was commonly applied to anyone holding a charge or trust. In the army he was a non-commissioned officer between *Jamadar* and *Naik* corresponding to a Sergeant. Later on in the civil constabulary battalions of police he was the 3rd class Head Constable. There was also a village officer called *havalgar* who assisted the *patel* (village headman) both in police and revenue matters.

^{73.} *Naik* This was a term originating from the Sanskrit word *nayaka* meaning leader. The word was used for a head of small band of soldiers, a corporal in the army or 4th class police Head Constable.

^{74.} Seema Alavi, *The Sepoy and the Company*, She says that this is reflected by the Regulations passed between 1766 and 1790 for the admission to and the administration of the Invalid Thanah, p114.

The Invalid Sepoys came to be closely associated with the *Sihbandis* on various occasions these 'former' Sepoys were utilised when found capable to do policing duties, such as furnishing escorts for military stores, guards in '*Kacherries*' (Courts), gaols supervising convict labourers while they worked on the roads, treasury proceeding by water⁷⁵ etc. On 27th March 1789 there was a Resolution to substitute 'native' Invalids to do duties of *sihbandis*⁷⁶. This was apparently a reformatory action designed as a means of effecting a reduction in the expenses of that Corp⁷⁷. But it was also observed at the same time it was emphasized that such men who were really capable of doing these duties would not be found sufficient as the *sihbandi* duties required 'active men'⁷⁸. Thus the number of such ex-army men on *sihbandi* duties was not large and was concentrated in selective areas, only where there was an invalid establishment⁷⁹.

75. Ibid, p119. The thanah also assisted the local administration in many ways for the Invalid *Sipahis* from Awadh and Bihar performed a variety of civilian jobs in Bengal. Their presence as *chaukidars* and garrison troops in Bengal marks the early pattern of migration from Bihar to down country. Anand Yang discusses this migration pattern for mid-19th Century in great detail. Anand Yang, *The Limited Raj: Agrarian relations in colonial India, Saran district (1793-1920)*, (Berkeley, 1989) p191.

76. It was later approved by the Court of Directors on 19th May 1790.

77. C.A. Bayly mentions that Lord Cornwallis was sent to India in 1786 with a brief from the Directors of English East India Company to reduce the expenses by reforming the administration of Bengal. The Company was faced with a financial crisis since its revenue could not support both its civil and military establishment and the annual investment in India on goods for European markets. C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the making of the British Empire, New Cambridge History of India Series, Vol.2.1*, (Cambridge 1988) p65.

78. The Governor General gave his concurrence for the proposition but had such reservations and also that upon an average guards employed at each of these places amounted to 300 Sepoys, number which could not have been supplied by the invalids, were they fit for such service, but it was felt that although the invalids could serve for guards where activity was required, they might be usefully employed in furnishing escorts for military stores and treasures by water transport. From the Governor General in Council to the Court of Directors, Correspondence dated 25th March 1785, with regard to reduction of expenses in Civil and Military establishments, Fort William - India House Correspondence, Vol.15 (1782-86) Military Series, NAI, New Delhi, p 395.

79. Seema Alavi, *The Sepoy and the Company*, The native Invalid Thanah establishment in northern India were found in certain districts. Seema Alavi says that it became 'the vanguard of colonial expansion west wards'. The thanah was strategically located on the fringes of the erstwhile Mughal Subas. The places it was found were Bhagalpur, Bihar, Shahbad, Saran, Tirhut, Purnia, Benaras, Chittagong, Hapur and Kumaon, p97.

Though the irregular corp of the Company primarily composed of local men of the provinces, it also had 'disbanded soldiers' of the contemporary regional armies of indigenous rulers⁸⁰ and transferred 'volunteers' from the Company army. These were intermixed with the majority in the corp to teach them discipline and knowledge of military duties and regimentation. This admixture of regular sepoy with 'undisciplined' irregulars was 'with the view ... of giving to each Company of Sebundy Corp the advantages to be derived from the superior knowledge and sterdiness of the volunteers'⁸¹.

With such an arrangement it was hoped that "each company would thus possess a body of men whose superior discipline and higher tone of military feeling could hardly fail to be productive of the best effects on their less throughly trained comrades and to execute a spirit of emulation among them to attain the same degree of excellence in their ... exercise ⁸².

THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINE

This admixture was in line with early British state's obsession with notions of discipline and order that were generally unleashed by the burgeoning colonial mentality. Clearly there was a visible shift in the ideological tempo with constant focus in the official correspondence on the word 'discipline' in the context of the Company *sihbandis*. This was a significant development conspicuous by its absence in the pre-British references of *sihbandis*.

⁸⁰. For example the British wanted to absorb the disbanded troops of Begum Sumroo's army. See the letter From Macnagthen, Secretary to the Government of India To P.A. Reynolds, Officiating General Superintendent of Thugs, FDPBR, (P.C.), 2nd May 1836, No. 92 & 93, NAI, New Delhi.

⁸¹. From, W.B. Pemberton (Captain on Special Duty) To, W.H. Macnagthen Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Fort William, FDPBR, (P.C.), 6th April 1835, No. 107, NAI, New Delhi.

⁸². Ibid.

Under the early British administration there were constant complaints about the relative lack of discipline among such corps leading to their ineffectivity and unreliability. It was felt that the "various continual services these people are employed under (makes) it almost impossible to have them properly disciplined" and that this was 'naturally inevitable' consequence of their 'anomalous position'⁸³. The need of some 'simple' and 'systematic' training was emphatically underlined⁸⁴. The idea was to make "serviceable soldiers" through the Company's 'Sebundy Corps' out of the indigenous untrained *barkandazes* as a valuable aid for, 'the maintenance of general peace of the country' that was 'sufficiently respectable as an armed body'.⁸⁵ The provision for drill⁸⁶ was to be introduced other *sihbandis* in line with such concerns for disciplining the 'irregulars' for them to perform their various duties effectively. This analogous regimentalization of *sihbandis* relative to the military way of life without its really being a part of the military was a very interesting development under the early colonial regime.

Besides drill parades, attendance also came to be carefully calculated to determine pay. There were concerns about securing constant attendance of corp when on various duties. Britishers tried to regimentalize these enforcement agencies like a military unit, perhaps to differentiate them from other contemporary retained forces by indigenous authorities. The British felt that such a way of life will not only make *sihbandis*

^{83.} Governor General's Minutes on the reorganisation of 'Sebundy Corp' for Lower Assam, FDPBR, (P.C.), dated 19th Feb 1935, No. 50, NAI, New Delhi.

^{84.} Governor General's Minutes on improvement of police establishment at Patna, Bihar, Foreign Dept. Secret Branch, Secret Consultaion (hereafter S.C.), 24th July 1839, No. 1 and 2, NAI, New Delhi.

^{85.} Ibid, it went on say that with measures of training and planned organisation of Company's 'Sebundy Corps' could be brought to act rapidly in quarters in which a military corp kept in 'cantonment' at a central station could not reach without much delay'.

^{86.} Letter from Judicial Department, To the Secretary to the Government of India, Fort William, MDP, dated 27th Oct. 1803, No. 71, NAI, New Delhi.

more reliable but would also induce a 'feeling of pride' and self respect that 'would attach them to the service' and prevent desertions⁸⁷.

The significant measures of training led to the inclusion of "a number of Invalid non-commissioned officers and sepoy as may be necessary to instruct the *sihbandis* in the use of musquet and bayonet until they shall have acquired a knowledge thereof and in those place where detachment of invalid sepoys are now stationed they were employed in training the *Sihbandis* to the use of fire arms".⁸⁸

The early British notions of disciplining the *sihbandis* was conceived to regulate their operation in groups and not individually as guards on detachment duties from the rest of the corps. This was unlike the British perceptions of disciplining with regard to the regular soldiers of the Company army. The British emphatically underlined the need to individually discipline the regular soldiers of the army, by regulating his personal dietary habits, on his consumption of intoxicating substances, putting him lunatic asylums specially built to discipline and control 'insane sepoys'.⁸⁹ But regarding *sihbandis* it was felt that " considering the distinct and seperate duties Sebundys have to perform how any improvement of their discipline can very materially avail to this end, the effect of such measure being calculated to operate principally when men act in bodies and not in the case of so many minute individual guards".⁹⁰

⁸⁷. From, Capt Watson, Commisioner of Sylhet Local Corp, To , G. Swinston Esq, Secretary to Government with Secret and Political Department, Fort William, Foreign Department Secret Branch, (S.C.), 13th Oct. 1826, No. 2, NAI, New Delhi.

⁸⁸. Extract of a Revenue letter from Bengal, Signed by I.H. Harrington, Sub Secretary to the Government Fort William, To , Sir John Shore, Gov. General in Council, Fort William, BRC, dated 28th Oct. 1783, IOLR, London.

⁸⁹. Seema Alavi, *The Sepoy and the Company*, says that in 1795, the East Indian Company established for its Indian Sepoys the first native lunatic asylum at Monghyr, in Bihar. In 1800 the Governor General extended its facilities to non-servicemen also, but by the end of the year this order was revoked. Those civilian lunatics who had been admitted earlier remained in the asylum, henceforth the asylum remained exclusively for native sepoys.p142

⁹⁰. From, Lt. Ludlow, Officer Commanding Provincial Battalion at Benaras To, G. Dowdswell, Secretary to the Government in Judicial Department, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, Fort William, dated 24th Nov. 1803, No. 10, IOLR, London.

The letter quotes correspondence of I. Deane, Magistrate of Jaunpur with Lt. Ludlow at a previous date regarding 'Sebundy Corps'.

Musical band as in the army became an important part of the establishment. There were Buglers, Cymbal players, drummers, '*tashha*' players etc. It is not clear whether these were used in only during drill parades and exercises or on occasion of its 'movments as a company' too. The popular use of such charges became common by early 19th Century. These were symbolically significant as these came to proclaim the 'establishment' as a 'public' agency doing important 'public duty' and not some force stealthly operating on the sidelines. The music brought in attention to its authority and provided a kind of boldness to its identity.

Services of *bhistees* (water bearers) 'civil' surgeons⁹¹, native doctors and apothecary⁹². were also attached to the agency. Services of auxillaries assigned to this establishment for support reflects on its growing significance. The need of its effeciency and quality service was highlighted by such measures. Furthermore, lands were appropriated and assigned for public buildings⁹³, lines^(a), and grounds for parades^(b) of the 'Sebundy Corps'.

There were two seperate paradoxical currents that characterized the establishment of the irregular militias of the early colonial state. On one hand, there was the systematic disassociation from the military and on the other hand there was the constant persistence militaristic parlances and influence which got them caught somewhere between the military and civilian institutions.

^{91.} Resolution reached for a surgeons to be attached to the 'civil station' where the head quarters of the Provincial Battalion are established for the medical care of the officers and men of those battalions signed by G. Dowdswell, Secretary to the Government, Fort William, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultation, p/129/2, 5 Nov.–29 Dec. 1803, No. 2, IOLR, London.

^{92.} Apothecary-Druggist and Pharmaceutical chemist. The appointment of an apothecary to the 'Assam 'Sebundy Corp', FDPBR, Federal Consultation (F.C.), 20th April 1842, No. 86, NAI, New Delhi.

^{93.} (a) & (b) From R. Cunnigham, Collector of Allahabad, enclosing a letter from the Collector of Etawah To, Thomas Graham Esq., Acting President and member of the Board of Revenue, Fort William, dated 30th April 1803, Proceedings of Board of Revenue (1803-1807), Vol-I Jan-June 1803, Consultation dated 13th May 1803, letter No. 9, 10 and 11, 13.

REFORMS OF 1804 : The emergence of 'Provincial Corps'

The need to 'reform' the existing 'Sebundy Corps' became apparent by early 19th Century with various statments of inefficient state of these serving under Judges, Magistrates, Collectors became a popular occurrence. "The Governor General in Council satisfied of the necessity of reforming that establishment".⁹⁴ This need was accounted for in their undisciplined form which according to the administrators made them 'ineffective' and 'unreliable'. There were also demands to 'raise the character of the corps'.⁹⁵ There were concerns about the contemptible state of their arms, which were felt to be in 'very bad state' due to 'long use, having been served on ten to twelve years ago many of them now unservicable'. There were on various occasions requisitions stating the need 'an emergent indent for a new set'.⁹⁶

By the reform measures of 1804, seven 'Provincial Battalions'⁹⁷ were created out of the existing *sihbandis* of the various districts, and then strength and local distribution was clearly outlined⁹⁸. These were formed for the performance of the public duties previously assigned or identifited with the 'Sebundy Corps'.

Inspite of some declaration of its discontinuance, the term 'Sebundy' was continued to be used interchangeably. These para-military Provincial battalions were the reformed forums of then rudimentary predecessors. These 'reformed corps' were to be commanded by European officers and to be formed, paid and clothed according to the plan as

^{94.} Extract of a Military Letter from Bengal, dated 1st Feburary 1804, Boards Collection, F/4/173, IOLR, London.

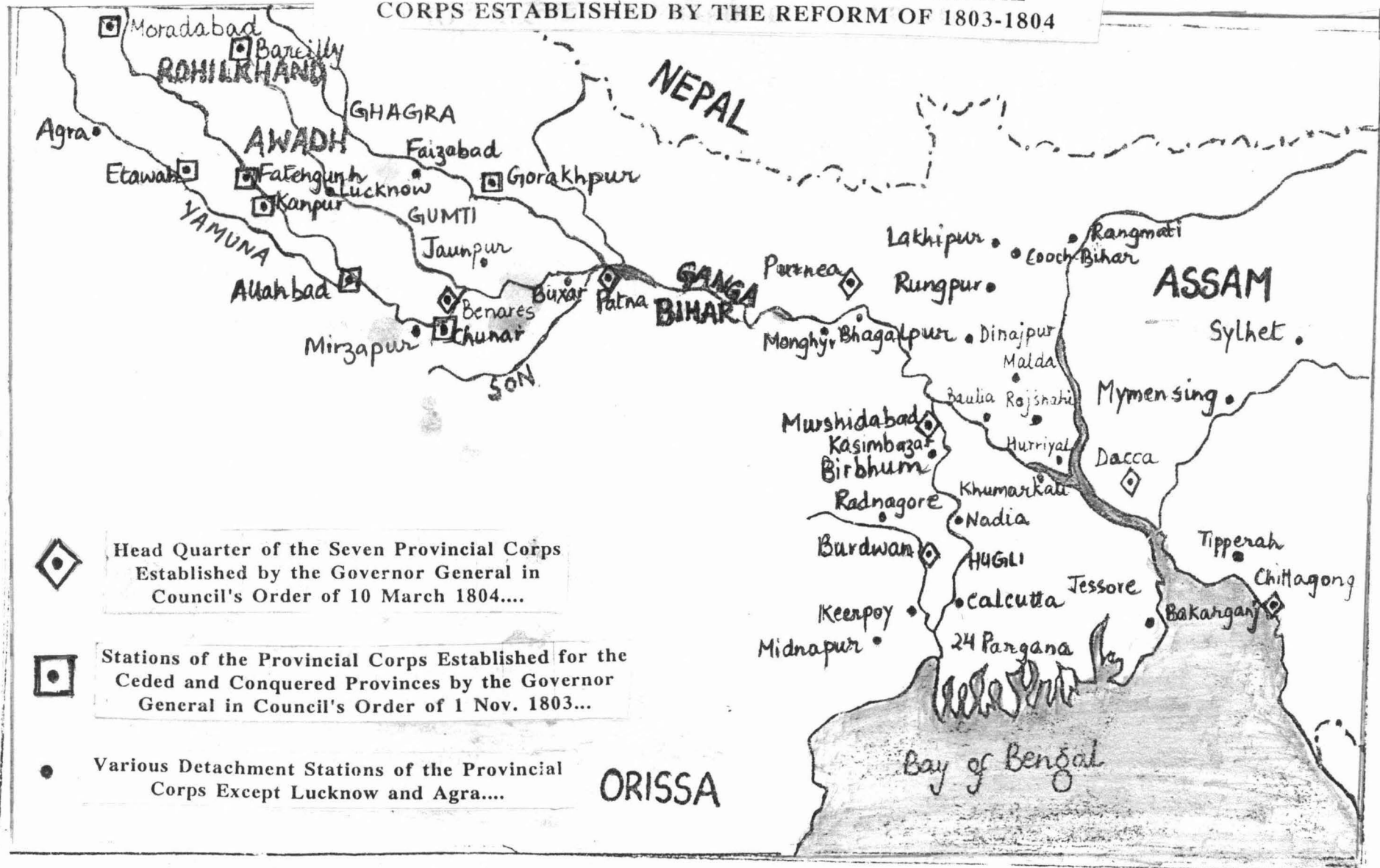
^{95.} Ibid.

^{96.} From P. Taylor, Opium Office, Calcutta To, His Excellency R. Wellesley, Governor General in Council, Fort William, Ld. dated 19th March 1803, MDP, 31st March 1803.

^{97.} Extract of a Judicial Letter from Bengal, 10th March 1804, Boards Collection, F/4/173, IOLR, London.

^{98.} Ibid, the plan also clearly outlined the detachement station and also the particular departments under which these were to be specially deployed under. For details see the Appendix-3 and also see the Map illustrating the various locations and the Corps in the Bengal Presidency.

LOCATIONS OF THE 'ORGANISED' PROVINCIAL CORPS ESTABLISHED BY THE REFORM OF 1803-1804



Head Quarter of the Seven Provincial Corps Established by the Governor General in Council's Order of 10 March 1804....



Stations of the Provincial Corps Established for the Ceded and Conquered Provinces by the Governor General in Council's Order of 1 Nov. 1803...



Various Detachment Stations of the Provincial Corps Except Lucknow and Agra....

ORISSA

Bay of Bengal

had been previously adopted for the 'Sebundy Corps of the Ceded and Conquered provinces by the Governor General's order of 1st November 1803'.⁹⁹

The Provincial battalions for the Lower provinces were to have their Head Quarters at Benares, Patna, Murshidabad, Chittagong, Burdawan, Purnea and Dacca. For them European commissioned officer were to perform the duties of Adjutants. 'No *batta* was to be drawn for the native officers and the sepoys of provincial battalion in any situation, nor were they to be considered entitled to the Invalid establishment except in such cases as shall have been drafted from the regular native battalion'.¹⁰⁰ The pay of the provincial battalion was to be from the treasures of the Collectors of the district. Monthly returns of Corps were to be transmitted through the Magistrates to the Governor General in Council. The 'reformed corps' was to be placed under the general control and authority of the Magistrates of the provinces.

It was emphatically underlined that the "discipline and efficiency of the Provincial corps will be considerably improved and consequently the men composing the reformed corps may be confidently relied upon for the execution of the various internal.....duties in the several provinces and districts to which the corps were attached."¹⁰¹

The efforts to establish a reformed Sebundy Corps' in various provinces was a measure much inspired by the preceding measure for organising Calcutta Native

^{99.} Extract of Military letter from Bengal, dated 1st Feb. 1804, Boards Collection, F/4/173, IOLR, London.

They were to be stationed at 'Cawnpore' (Kanpur) with detachments Allahabad, Farruckhabad and at 'Futteghur' (Fateghar), with detachments at Etawah, Bareilly, Moradabad, and at Chunar with detachment ('Gorakpore').

^{100.} Or such of the native officers and men as shall be rendered incapable of further duty from wounds received in execution of their duty.

Extract from Bengal Military Consultations, dated 7th Oct. 1803, IOLR, London.

^{101.} Extract of Military letter Bengal, dated 1st Feb. 1804, Boards Collection, F/14/173, IOLR, London.

Militia in 1798 by the Governor Genral for the defence of Fort William and other miscellaneous duties¹⁰² of the town of Calcutta.

II

Just Like *Sihbandis*, the *Najibs* emerged as 'irregular' militia levies by late 18th Century. But unlike *Sihbandis* their journey to such a position was from the core of the Mughal military system. Before the late 18th Century they did not have any temporary, seasonal or irregular connotation attached them. In the post-Buxar scenario they found themselves at the periphery of the indigenous military system. Though *najib* was an Arabic title literally meant 'noble' either by conduct or by birth. Under the British rule these transitioned into corps retained chiefly as a kind of militia for specific periods of time, and this designation came to be obsolete as their primarily militaristic nature of job, devolved by late 18th Century. By then these came to have an administrial auxillary kind of connotation.

^{102.} The raised Corp had 'reasonable' and 'modrate' scale for the detachment required for escort duties 29th Oct. 1798 the first regular militia Corp came into form for Calcutta. The outlined places for the requirment of this Corp were mentioned in a Minute from Governor General, dated 6th July 1795, Military Department Proceeding, 6th July 1795, No. 7, NAI, New Delhi.

It was as follows :

| Places where required | S. | J. | H. | N. | D. | B. | Sepoys |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|
| Calcutta town guard | 1 | 2 | 5 | 5 | - | 2 | 110 |
| European Jail | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 35 |
| House of Correction | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 12 |
| General Hospital | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 30 |
| Chief Justice | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 8 |
| Insane Hospital | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 8 |
| 24 'Pergunnah' Jail Guards | - | 1 | 3 | 3 | - | - | 36 |
| Total | 3 | 4 | 13 | 13 | - | 2 | 239 |

Abbreviations used above :

S – 'Subedar', J – 'Jemadar', H – 'Havildars', N – 'Naicks', D – Drummers and B – Buglers.

NAJIBS IN PRE-BRITISH INDIA

The cavalry that was the mainstay of the central Imperial army of the Mughals was the preserve of the 'gentlemen troopers'¹⁰³. Though many of these cavalrymen were from a rural background, the central and predominant feature of the Mughal cavalry was its urban social base. They resided in the towns and *qasbahs* along with their family and military establishments. Their military lifestyle provided opportunities for interaction between trooper and urban middle classes. These were the *ashrafs* and *shurafa* class of society.¹⁰⁴

The troopers came to share an urban outlook with the *ashraf* which created empathy between the troopers and *ashraf* class which was further encouraged by the Mughal state.

The importance of the 'gentlemen troopers' who had close contacts with the urban and rural professional groups of the *qasbah* which continued into the period which followed the imperial decline.¹⁰⁵ Under the regional polities, these came to compose largescales of the *qasbah* population by early 18th Century and flocked into Awadh

¹⁰³. I.M. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Mughal Empire*, (Patna, 1976), The infantry consisting of matchlockmen and archers, who were the foot soldiers was relegated to oblivion in comparison. Though Akbar maintained 12,000 matchlockmen but the number of regular infantry in the standing army of Mughals did not show any increase in the period. It remained localized in the provinces and was not in the front line of any major military campaign. Infantry was not popularly trained and had little sense of discipline.

Qureshi says that, "the *piyadas*, as the foot soldiers were called, were mostly used for civil purposes".p133

¹⁰⁴. Ibid, p119. They were also referred to as *Ahadis*, these were employed individuals and were not a part of the mansabdar's contingent. Though some mansabdar's had *Ahadis* under them but they were placed under *mansabdar's* only being specially selected for the purpose. They were men of good birth but without wherewithal to start of as mansabdars. *Ahadis* were paid higher salary than an ordinary soldier, which made them an 'elite corp'. This term specially used by Qureshi, in their context. He says that towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign by early 18th Century the *ahadis* became a term synonymus for laziness and a lazy person.

¹⁰⁵. Seema Alavi, *The Sepoy and the Company*, p17

Many *Qasbahs* and towns of Awadh including Faizabad - the Nawab's most beautiful and historically most significant town - owed their origin to the investment and consolidation of the 'gentlemen troopers' class.

Nawab's army in large numbers. Gulam Nabi Azad Bilgrami, in his description of the defence of Awadh against the Afghans in 1751, shows that military employment provided the livelihood of large section of the urban population belonging to respectable *ashraf* families. He wrote,

"In defence of Awadh against inroads of noble born (*Shurafa-o-Nujaba*) of the province specially the *sayyids* of Bilgram laid down their lives".¹⁰⁶

However in the reign of Shuja-ud-daula, there occurred a very significant change in the composition and organisation of the Nawabi army. From 1764, Shuja started organising a peasant army.¹⁰⁷ There were deep-rooted causes related to the political and social role which the military was to play in the consolidation of Nawabi. But the immediate cause of this shift was the dismal performance of the Awadh cavalry force at the battle of Buxar in 1764 and Shuja's political problems with the 'gentlemen troopers'. Muhammed Faiz Baksh the historian of Faizabad, reported that Shuja was disappointed at the treachery of his Mughal cavalymen in the battle of Buxar as many of these sided with the Company army.¹⁰⁸

By the 1765, Shuja had begun to recruit his new cavalry and infantry units and started organising his artillery. For this reorganisation, he began to recruit from groups of professional warriors¹⁰⁹ and peasants outside the Mughal military system. The change in the military system, induced political tensions in the Nawabi. There

^{106.} Ibid, p18 cf. M. Alam, *Crisis of Empire*, (New Delhi, 1986), p234-36.

^{107.} Ibid, Shuja began to emphasize the significance of an infantry force. In 1757, Robert Clive had raised his famous *Lal Paltan* as a small body of infantry troops drilled in European manner. It is possible that Shuja had this precedent in mind when he began to build up his own infantry force, based on a peasant army, p19

^{108.} Ibid.

^{109.} Ibid, One such group was the warrior ascetics called *Gosains*, who sold their services to the highest bidder. Another such ethnic group incorporated in Shuja's army was that of Mewatis. These men, were from Mewat, had so far remained on the margins of the Mughal military system. But in Shuja's military force they were well represented and were often used to crush the power of the Mughal cavalry men, p20.

was a gulf between the urban-based gentry class (*shurafa*) called *najibs* which had dominated the Mughal and the pre-Buxar country recruits. The *najibs* prided themselves on their noble descent and urban background. Ghani mentions in his *Tarikh-i-Awadh* that the *najibs*, who were also referred to as '*mian sahib*' (a term of respect used for the *ashraf*), used abusive language against the peasant regiments of the Nawab's army. Referring to the popular stereotypes of the *najibs* among the Awadh populace he writes that 'it was said that a work for which 1000 Telengas¹¹⁰ were required could be performed by 100 *najibs*'.¹¹¹ The peasant troopers disliked the *najibs* Shuja was also weary of the *najibs* arrogance and by late 1760s he was in a position to use his peasant army to curtail the power of these cavalymen.

Najibs started getting alienated and increasingly marginalised in the post-Buxar, defeated nawabi army, that wanted to organise itself in infantry units drilled in European manner.¹¹² Shuja started the process of building on the infantry force of his army shelving the cavalry units in comparison. As the forte' of such troopers was the latter they represented the winds of change resisting any kind of training to new modes of warfare. Such group steadily devolved into 'irregular infantry that disdained uniform and carrying of musket'.¹¹³

^{110.} This was term used in the 18th Century as a synonym for sipahi, it arose because the sipahis first came from 'Telenga Country', that was in Karnataka. William Crooke mentioned in the context of the 20th Century that the term was still used to denote a 'sipahi' or armed policeman. cf. P. D. Reeves(ed), *Sleeman in Oudh: an abridgment of W. H. Sleeman's A Journey through the kingdom of Oudh in 1849-1850*, (Cambridge, 1971)

^{111.} Seema Alavi, *The Sepoy and the Company*, p25
cf. N. Ghani, *Tarikh-i- Awadh*, Vol II, (Lucknow, 1918) p160.

^{112.} Ibid, p.20.
Nawab of Awadh utilised the services of the European adventurers. Shuja adopted their skills and techniques to drill and discipline the peasant recruits. Twenty-two Frenchmen such as Monsieur Sonson and Monsieur Pedrose were employed in Shuja's army, training foot regiments, establishing canon foundaries and manufacturing implements of war in the arsenal, cf Faiz Baksh, *Tarikh-i-Farabaksh*, Vol II, p159. See also Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *A Fatal Friendship : The Nawab, the British and the city of Lucknow*, (New Delhi, 1985), pp17-40.

^{113.} From G.N. Saletore (Ed.), *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, (1788-1789), (NAI, New Delhi, 1953). In an explanatory footnote on p213.

By 1780, they are described as being "clothed in blue vests and drawers, furnishing their own arms and ammunitions (mostly matchlock, sword, shields, bow and arrows)".¹¹⁴ It was felt that "their discipline was very contemptible". According to Captain Thomas Williamson 'though they answered very well for garrison duty, but could not stand the charge of cavalry, having no bayonets while their arms were totally unfit for prompt execution such as those who had bayonets had no locks, those who had hammers to their locks had no lock, or at any rate the flints were wanting such ammunition and cartridge as they had been through damp and time, (had) become so incorporated with the wooden-pouch blocks that when touched the top came off leaving the powder and ball a fixture'.¹¹⁵

The aversion of *najibs* to succumb to European, method, order, drill and discipline drives which swept the post-Buxar Nawabi army, led them to the peripheries of the military ambit. They became the archaic element of a bypassed era, anachronistic under a changed scenario.

NAJIBS AND THE EARLY BRITISH STATE

By early 19th Century these marginalised sections found themselves outside the regular infantry of the indigenous polities and the Company army. They joined the ranks of irregular muslim mercenaries (mostly Pathans or Rohillas). Their modes of warfare became obsolete and decadent.¹¹⁶ They started to be increasingly employed temporarily and seasonally by provincial the administrators or in private capacities by local zamindars, *ta'alluqadar*, European and indigenous mercantile classes etc. to act as guards and escorts. It was observed that though 'they disliked to stand

^{114.} William Irvine, *The army of the Indian Moghuls : Its organisation and administration*, (London, 1903), 3rd reprint (New Delhi, 1962), p164.

^{115.} Ibid, p165. With such a predicament they were further described as 'food for powder'.

^{116.} Shelford Bidwell, *Swords for Hire : European mercenaries in 18th Century India*, (London, 1971) pp56-57. For an early 19th Century representation of the Najib see illustration on p66.



A Najib, armed with a matchlock

From, Shelford Bidwell, *Swords For Hire :
European Mercenaries in the 18th Century* (London, 1971), p37.
Taken from the Department of Prints and Drawings in the India
Office Library, reproduced by Mr. S. Bidwell with the permission
of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

sentry or do any fatiguing duty considering it their only business to fight and to protect the person of their price'.¹¹⁷

On various occasions they emerged as auxiliaries and were used for skirmishing and also doing camp chores besides guarding. Because of their obsolescence *najibs* devolved into a term of ridicule it was observed by Sitaram *Sipahi* about his early years as a regular soldier of the Company's army that 'great abuse was given (to) us by the regular sepoys. Who called us *nujeebs* (irregulars)'.¹¹⁸ Their pay came to be nominally deduced at four Rupees a month, like that of other irregulars. This was liable to numerous other cuts as they were obliged to provide their own clothing, arms, accoutrements, ammunitions except on the occasions of actual fighting when they were entitled to provide a ball from Government officials.

"The arms, with which they provided themselves were either matchlock or sword. Their dues were often ten to twelve months in arrears, and this obliged them to borrow money for their own substitute and that of their families and usually at exorbitant rates of interest. If they were disabled they had even lesser chance of recovering the arrears of pay due to them; and if they were killed, their families had even lesser. Even their arms and accoutrements, which they had 'purchased with their own money, were commonly seized by the officers of the government and sold for the benefit of the state".¹¹⁹ With such conditions of employment, their reliability in times of emergency was always doubted by the early British administrators.

^{117.} From, The Resident at Lucknow, To the Gov. Gen. in Council, Fort William, Ld. 6th July 1788, Corr. No. 524, *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. VIII (1788-1789), G.N. Saletore (ed), NAI (New Delhi, 1953) p213.

^{118.} Sitaram, *From Sepoy to Subedar : Being the life and adventures of Subedar Sitaram, a native officer of the Bengal army, written and related by himself*, Translated by Lt. Col. Norgate and edited by J. Lunt (reprint, Hongkong, 1970), p82.

^{119.} P.D. Reeves (ed), *Sleeman in Oudh*, pp135-136.
We also come across a reference to *sihbandis* revolting to release their pay in arrears. For an interesting account on this see, *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. XII, (1794-1795) Corr. No. 577 dated 18th August 1794. From Govind Rao Gaikwar To-English Resident at Poona. The writer mentions that 'he was worried on account of *sihbandies* who were clamouring for arrears of pay due to them', p132.

THE BRITISH USAGES OF *NAJIBS*

The Britishers utilised such sections of the marginalised, wandering indigenous military detritus of regional polities^{120 (a)} for their internal surveillance and policing duties. They organised them into various *tomans*^(b) that were used for detached duties in lieu of various parties of regular sepoy deployed for such tasks.¹²¹ By 1830s and 1840s 'Nujeebs Corps'¹²² were employed increasingly for Thuggee and Dacoity suppression as 'mobile police squads.' Under the administration of Captain W.H. Sleeman the Thuggee and Dacoity Department relied tremendously on 'nujeb' tomans for their surveillance needs as their 'means of pursuit' for the thug gangs on the run, prisoners, escorting approvers and the officers of the Thuggee and Dacoity Department; helping the British state to supervise the convicts serving the jail sentence.

Najibs under the British administration emerged as the irregular levies entertained for the purpose "almost always came to consider themselves in temporary employment".¹²³ Such a nature led the administrators to constantly doubt and question their ability, character, efficiency and reliability. It was observed in an account that *najibs* could not "have that regard for character which is felt by the regular sepoy and which

^{120.} Ibid, this was also linked to the British perceptions of public order, as these discharged men were volatile and loose sections who could be accumulated for various sorts coercive and nefarious activities. W.H. Sleeman noted this in the context of discharged regiments of *najibs* by Awadh Nawabi. He said that 'such bands are always sure to find a patron among landholders ready to receive and protect them, for a due share of their booty', p268.

^{121.} Their was general restriction on the use of regular sepoy for detached policing and surveillance duties for the suppression of Thuggee. See the letter from, W. Briggs, Pol. Agent Thuggee and Dacoity Department, Nusirabad - To, Capt. Reynolds, Officiating General Superintendent of Thuggee and Dacoity Dept., Jabalpur, Ld. 4th August 1836, Letter No. 278, FDPBR, (P.C.), 19th December 1836, No. 47, NAI New Delhi.

^{122.} The establishment of 'Nujeb Corp' existed much before W.H. Sleeman inducted them to curb Thuggee in various parts of British India. In 1815, one Captain Hearsey was incharge of a 'corp of nujeebs' in Bareilly region. See Appendix No. 4. For the correspondence on this Corp see a file of ongoing communication on an irregular infantry. Foreign Dept. Secret Branch, 11 April 1815, No.49,51,52 and 56, NAI, New Delhi.

^{123.} From, H. Wilson, the Agent of Governor General in Doab,
Lt. Briggs, the Agent of Governor General in Rajputana,
Lt. Thomas, the Agent of Governor General in Gwalior,
To, W.A. Macnagthen Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Fort William, FDPBR, (P.C.), 15th Feb. 1836, No. 22, NAI, New Delhi.

was necessary to guard them against the many temptations to neglect their duty or abuse their authority.¹²⁴

Their discipline was thought to be contemptible. They were considered to be 'under disciplined' because the tenure of their service was such to render them careless of consequence, comparisons were in variably made with the soldiers of regular army who, it was felt had 'something to loose in the event of misconduct'.¹²⁵ Their constant movement was considered detrimental to their being regularly scrutinized and disciplined. It was observed with concern that the 'habits of irregulars would lead them to pay less attention to orders furnished as to the method of carrying on the duties than regular troops accustomed from youth to discipline and subordination'.¹²⁶

IRREGULAR MILITIA LEVIES AND LOCALISED POLICING AGENCIES

Irregular agencies like the *Sihbandis* and 'tomans' of 'nujeeps' were in addition to the various localised policing agencies like *barkandazes* and *chaukidars*. These were semi military levies with policing functions and duties. They corresponded and supplemented the local policing agencies, acting in 'concert with the police as occasion arose' sometime *Sihbandis* money is revenue was appropriated for police reform and this distribution was considered very equitable'.¹²⁷

^{124.} Ibid.

^{125.} From, Lt. Reynolds, Officiating General Superintendent of Thugee Department, Jabalpur - To, W.A. Macnagthen Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Fort William, Ld. 3rd Dec. 1836, FDPBR, (P.C.), 19th Dec. 1836, No.47, NAI, New Delhi.

^{126.} From, W. Briggs, Political Agent to the Governor General, Nusirabad, Rajputana To Captain Reynolds, Officiating General Superintendent, Jabalpur, Ld. 4th August 1836, FDPBR, 19th Dec. 1836, No.47, NAI, New Delhi.

^{127.} From, W.H. Macnagthen, Secretary to the Government, Simla To, Lt. Col. N. Alves, Agent to the Governor General for the state of Rajputana, Letter dated 28th Oct. 1838, FDPBR, 30th Jan. 1839, No.34, NAI, New Delhi.

On several occasions in the official correspondence of the early 19th Century there were discussions and proposals about incorporating the 'nujcebs' with 'ordinary police' of the country, for the reduction in the expenditure of general policing agencies. But it was felt that the "wandering life that is led by the nujcebs removes them frequently from one police jurisdiction to another, either in pursuit of thugs or on a sudden call from their immediate superior Magistrates of districts therefore would not have security of their (*Najibs*) presence in case of need and could not venture to reduce their ordinary establishment in the precarious hope of obtaining the services of nujcebs".¹²⁸

By 1845, three tomans of 'nujcebs' employed in Bengal were to be distributed as supernumeries among the seven Police Battalions¹²⁹ and were to be given a course of drill on their arrival to the battalion.

PARA-MILITARY POLICING AGENCIES AND PUBLIC ORDER

According to C.A. Bayly¹³⁰ one important aspect of the enduring imperial army was its growing 'seclusion from the civil population so the colonial army 'housed in fort-barracks' could hardly be quartered on indigenous population for its control. Here such para-military agencies filled the gap created by this systematic separation and emerged as the upkeepers of early British state's public order and its control.

^{128.} From, Lt. Reynolds, General Superintendent of Thuggee Department, Jabalpur, To, W.A. Macnagthen, Secretary to the Government of India, Fort William, Ld. 3rd Dec. 1836, FDPBR, (P.C.), 19th Dec. 1836, No.47, NAI, New Delhi.

^{129.} Recommendation letter from, Col. W.H. Sleeman, General Superintend, Thuggee and Dacoitee Dept. Jhansi, To F. Currie, Secretary to Government of India, Fort William, Ld. 3rd July 1845, FDPBR, (P.C.), 1st Nov. 1845, No. 12, NAI, New Delhi.

The seven Police Battalions in which the distribution occurred were located in Agra, Ambala, Bareilly, Meerut, Delhi and Banda. The 'nujcebs' were to be given a course in drill upon their arrival in the Battalion.

^{130.} C.A. Bayly, *The Imperial Meridian*, Colonial armies had always been housed in fort-barracks. The construction of barracks, jails, and to a lesser extent, canals marked the physical expansion of the British Empire from Ontario to the river Ganges. It was against these manifestations of the 'military engineering school of architecture' as Bayly calls it that, offhandedly embellished with a few classical columns that the subjects of population throughout the world were to turn their wrath over in the 20th Century.

The evolution of such policing agencies was analogous to the changing notions of British public order, that by the late 18th Century entailed a close monitoring of the colonized indigenous society. Such came to be transpired by the growth of revitalised conservatism¹³¹ in Britain during this time of its rise as a dominant power in the world. In late 18th Century this conservatism invigorated problems of order as a defensive reaction against the terror of the French revolution which appeared to threaten the European social order as a whole.¹³² In the colonies there were increased propaganda drives to ensure the loyalty of the lower orders of the society.¹³³

The significant role of such agencies like the *Sihbandis* and *Najibs* to rally inferior groups to the Empire was considerable. This was important to the British State formation in this period because as a practice it broke the monopoly of the indigenous local elites on their employment (as their private retainers) and also portrayed a comparative loosening of the racial exclusivity¹³⁴ that was adhered to for the service in the Company army.

The social composition of the subaltern recruits of these early British paramilitary policing institutions suggest that they were composed of depressed orders of the colonial society such as wandering mercenaries (Pindaris and Mewatis) or men from low caste marginal communities like the Maghs, Badhuks¹³⁵ and Pasis.¹³⁶

^{131.} Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's, The History of British India and Orientalism*, (New York, 1992) p5, cf. C.A. Bayly, *The Imperial Meridian*, p2 and p11.

^{132.} Ibid, p5, cf. Clive Emsley, *British Society and the French wars (1793-1815)*, (London, 1979), p22.

^{133.} Ibid.

^{134.} C.A. Bayly, *The Imperial Meridian*, pp128-129. That racial exclusivity which preferred well build, martial castes Jats, Rajputs, Pathans as regulars soldiers.

^{135.} Badhuks-were classified by Col. W.H. Sleeman as Bagree dacoits. They were a hunting, low caste community of North India which spend eight to ten months in the year hunting. According to R. Singha these bands of hunters and fowlers sought the patronage local princes whether in their *shikar* (hunting) expedition or as auxillary contingents in their armies.

^{136.} Pasis-This was a low caste, marginal community concentrated in and around Awadh region. Primarily

The official attitude towards them was always of suspicion. Their way of life was considered 'motley' and at the 'dredges' of the civil society. The early British administrators looked at their nomadic, semi-pastoral life with unease as these were 'floating and loose' elements of the indigenous society elusive from the reach of taxation and policing. Theirs was the segregated sub-culture, the under world of the colonial psyche.

Even when their peripetatic lifestyle needed to be "looked into" it was with the understanding of them symbolising disorder by their very existence.¹³⁷ By early 19th Century there started the process of colonial stereotyping of communities as either black or white robbed them of their social complexities of existence. They were brandished as 'hereditary' or 'professional' criminals. This facilitated the early British perceptions of public order and control. This process was also accompanied by the induction of these communities that had diversity of occupation and a vagrant existence.¹³⁸ Such groups were absorbed into the subaltern networks of early colonial policing.¹³⁹

their occupation was described to be that of extraction of toddy or 'tari' palm which was popularly used for making inferior quality liquor. They got their name from their using a ropeloop in the form of a noose called in Hindustani as '*pasa*'. This was used by them in climbing, passed round their bodies and around palm trees. Their inferiority in the caste hierarchy also came to be associated with them also their being funtional as keepers of pigs or as 'swine herds' even acting as menial day labourers.

^{137.} Radhika Singha, " 'Providential' Circumstances: The Thugee campaign of the 1830s and legal innovation", *Modern Asian Studies*, 27,1,(1993), the early ethnographic interest in certain wandering 'volk' of India who were believed to resemble the gypsies of Europe was tinged with suspicion of criminality and immorality by their way of life, p102.

^{138.} Ibid, R. Singha in her article on Thugee Campaign of 1830s talks of 'men on the road' culture and its perceptions by colonial state with extreme unease, p98.

^{139.} Other studies have highlighted the process by which the colonial order rested on channelizing these various elements into the ranks of agricultural labour, penal factory workers or into the ranks of quarry and mine labourers. See for early 19th Century Radhika Singha's work on the Thugee campaign (Supra note No.137). For late 19th and early 20th Century there are works by Padmini Swaminathan, 'Prison as Factory : A Study of Jail Manufacturers in the Madras Presidency', *Studies in History*, Vol II, No. 1, n.s. (1995), pp77-99.

-Meena Radhakrishnan, 'The Criminal Tribes Act in the Madras Presidency Implications for Itinerant trading communities', *Indian Economic and Social History Review (IESHR)*, XXVI, 3, (July-Sept, 1989), pp.269-295.

-Sanjay Nigam, " 'Discipling and Policing the Criminals by Birth', Part-I : the making of a colonial stereotype the criminal tribes and castes of North India", *IESHR*, XXVII, 3, (April - June, 1990), pp.....

As during the course of 18th Century *najibs* came to be transformed from a prized designation or title associated with specific category of men to an administrative agency of the early colonial state, it came to absorb varied categories of disbanded soldiers of regional polities and mercenary groups as these became an aberration in the British notion of public order by their very existence. Col. W.H. Sleeman in early 19th Century blamed the indigenous rulers of the regional polities who disbanded their soldiers in the wake of adverse circumstances during the political anarchy and imbalances of the late 18th and early 19th Century all at once without making any provision for them. Sir John Malcolm, in this context brings out the fluidity between military and robbery occurring because of this mass exodus.¹⁴⁰ Radhika Singha says that, "highway robbery was probably always an option for such (displaced) bands as they moved between one employer and another or to and fro from home".¹⁴¹ In 1824 Bishop Reginald Heber perceived a political danger to the Company's rule from such hordes of down-at-heel Rohilla warriors who he thought had

"no visible occupation except lounging up and down with their swords and shields like ancient highlanders. It was estimated that they were no less than hundred thousand".¹⁴²

Both Badhuks and Pasis were included in the early British policing networks. In early 19th Century there was enlistment of 'Bagree approvers' in Police Battalions, FDPBR, (F.C.), dated 20th Oct. 1843, No. 261-268, NAI New Delhi. We have correspondence on 'Budhaks' dacoits to be employed in Police, FDPBR (F.C.), 20th June 1845, No. 42, NAI, New Delhi. Pasis were specially identified with the institution of *chaukidari* in Oudh.

^{140.} Sir John Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, 2 Vols, (London, 1823). Speaking of Mewati 'Sebundy' entertained by land lords and local rajas, he mentions that their leaders almost invariably took part in all robberies providing connivance and support. He says that, "they were in fact both police soldiers and principal robbers". He talks of them as 'soldiers of fortune' who were much dreaded mercenaries that came annually from Sind, Mekran in the North-West to Central India for service. These men had no knowledge whatsoever beyond that of profession of arms through which they operated whether as militia soldiers or robbers, Vol II, p.....

^{141.} R. Singha, " 'Providential' Circumstances", p99. She goes on to say that as the Imperial conquests of the company state brought about a contraction in this market and as various regional polities were blurred out of existence this flow between military 'service' and robbers became more one way and permanent.

^{142.} M.A. Laird (ed), *Bishop Heber in Northern India : Selections from Heber's Journal* (London, 1971), p 234.

Through such irregular militias as *sihbandis* and *najibs* these multitudinous peripetatic and low caste communities were united with the British state and sovereignty. The policing agencies which absorbed these recruits helped the early colonial state to monitor and control them within their notion of public order.

The contribution of irregular militia in the maintenance of British public order and authority was categorically underlined by the administrators. It was said,

"Sebundy sepoys are more respected and convey to individuals inclined to distrust the peace of the town a greater degree of awe; than armed peons or irregular burkandazes consequently not withstanding the extensive police establishments of the town. It has always been found necessary to station a considerable party of sepoys to patrol the town during the night".¹⁴³

These para-military force were considered necessary,

"not only for the general purpose of enforcing the respect due to the authority of government, but for the occasional purpose of apprehending such as violating the peace of the country, or oppose the authority of government as guards for cutcherries, treasures and factories to escort goods and treasure the property of the Honorable Company".¹⁴⁴

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Under the early colonial regime, *sihbandis* and *najibs* formed the 'irregular' militia for policing and control. These were intermediate institutions that strived

^{143.} From R. Alimuty, Acting Magistrate of zillah Mirzapur, To George Dowdeswell Esq., Secretary to Government in the Judicial Department, Fort William, Ld. 29th September 1801, Bengal Criminal and Judicial Consultations (8th Oct.-31st Dec., 1801)-Corr. Enlisted 17th Oct. 1801, No.5. IOLR, London. This was in the context of the town of Mirzapur and the number of foreigners who frequently visited for the purpose of commerce.

^{144.} Extract of a letter from Committee of Revenue signed on the behalf of the Committee by John Shore, To the Hon. Warren Hastings Esq., Gov. Gen. in Council of Revenue at Fort William, Ld. 31st July 1783. Bengal Revenue Consultations, 12 August 1783, IOLR, London.

to find an identity away from the elitest military ambit of the Company's army and came to be recognised as 'semi-militaristic' agencies with 'civil' functions. Such traits made them the proverbial proto-types of 'civil' constabulary battalions of the 20th Century.

With its pre-colonial roots, *sihbandis* transformed itself from temporary administrative practice to an established agency of public administration. The *najibs* transitioned from an honorary and distinctive military title to a marginalised institution of surveillance which was militarily unworthy. The British played a significant role in organising both of them as agencies of control and coercion for the maintenance of public order.

Interestingly, though both *sihbandis* and *najibs* operated in a militaristic framework, they categorically denied the military status. Hence they were neither a part of the regular army nor were they assimilated with the 'ordinary' civil policing institutions like *chaukidari* and *barkandazi*. They were the 'hung' agencies of control placed somewhere between military and the civilian society—being both para-military and partly-civil at the same time.

CHAPTER 3

Barkandaz And Chaukidar : The Unorganised And Rudimentary Policing Agencies Of Early British State

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the irregular militia there were varied, relatively unorganised, rudimentary agencies of policing and control spread out in various localities. These primarily localised institutions undertook control work and minutely supervised the local populace, regulating the activities of the community, enforcing order upon all the detailed life of their social world.

These formed a part of the regular establishments of the district policing and operated primarily in their localities. Unlike the *sihbandis* and *najibs* they were referred to on a singular level and not as 'companies' or 'corps'. Such 'loose' agencies were multitudinous and operated at the very lowest rung of the administrative structure. They were employed both by the Company officials and private individuals like the big plantation owners, local land controllers such as the zamindars, bankers, *gumashtas* etc. So the nature of their job depended on the character of their employing authority and his needs. Such agencies included the *barkandaz* (matchlockmen), the *chaukidars* (the local watchmen), *khojis*¹ (the local detectives) and *ghatwals*² (the keepers of mountain passes).

¹ *Khojis* were expert village detectives who hunted for absconding criminals for a reward in particular territories, almost like the bounty hunters of the West. By early 19th Century such an agency got its official recognition by Charles Metcalfe who considerably utilised it in and around the Delhi region to successfully apprehend criminals and to maintain order. As an agency of surveillance it was composed of local men who were well versed with the local terrain and its way of life. The institution had a negotiatory profile in which the rates of rewards were haggled about. *Khojis* set out on missions in the company of local *barkandazes* under the *thanadari* establishment or with the local *chaukidars* in search of the tracks of the wanted criminals. In Bengal region we come across Mirza Akbar Ali, who was called an expert detective of his times. See, *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol IX, 1791, Corr. No. 1810, p110. For a discussion on Charles Metcalfe and the *khojis* in the Delhi region see, S. Panigrahi, *Charles Metcalfe in India: Ideas and Administration*, (Delhi, 1979).

² For an elaborate mention of *ghatwals* please refer to chapter two, (supra note 30).

These emerged primarily as the so called 'detective police' enforcing order in the indigenous society. These were differentiated from the para-military establishments which were believed to have 'preventive nature'.³ However, in early British records the words *barkandaz* and *chaukidars* were used more in sense as a title or term for individuals performing miscellaneous policing duties. This was in contrast to the agencies of 'organised' policing like the *najibs* and *sihbandis* as discussed in the preceding chapter. Curiously enough these were never systematically organised like *sihbandis* into companies and hence we do not come across bands or 'tomans' of *chaukidars*, *bankandaz* or *paiks* corps. But they did appear to work in tandem, often assisting each other and the boundary between their respective spheres of authority seems to be blurred.

C.A. Bayly in his work on the role that the channelization of information about the 'native' society in the early British state formation brings out the significant part played by the covert agencies and networks to sustain such a process. He talks of a system of surveillance and moral suasion that worked with both upward and downward thrust to facilitate the needs of control for the state. According to him, 'the system which historians have tended to classify as administrations and police are better seen as agencies of surveillance and persuasion'.⁴ He focuses on the role of formal indigenous agencies such as *khufianavis*⁵, *waqianavis*⁶, *kasids*⁷, *harkaras*⁸ and certain other informal networks of beggars, prostitutes, midwives,

³ This differentiation is mentioned in J.S. Mill, *Writings on India*, (ed. by) M.Moir, J.M. Robson and Z.Moir (Toronto, 1990) p119.

⁴ Besides being important agencies of exhortation and information collection. C.A. Bayly, 'Knowing the country: Empire and Information in India', *MAS*, 27,1,(1993), p12

Bayly's work focuses on the creation and atrophy of channels of information between subject and ruler in colonial South Asia, which made the Empire possible, but also defined the roles of some important groups in the colonized society. It is argued that Indian polities were constituted to an unusual degree through their networks of espionage and information collection. Such issues are discussed in a more elaborate manner in his latest work titled 'Empire and Information: Intelligence gathering and Social Communication in India. (1780 - 1870), (Cambridge, 1996). In this more comprehensive study he looks at the various 'knowledgeable institutions' that pre-dated British rule but were plugged on by the colonial state, that organised them to harness their rule in India.

⁵ *Khufianavis* -- these were secret agents and writers maintained by the Mughal emperors and the provincial governors.

⁶ *Waqynavis / nawis* - these were the imperial news letter writers. Together these agencies formed the formal structure of the pre-colonial information network. They wrote regular reports on doings of officials and local magnates, on plunderers and malefactors, occasionally on the affairs of merchants. They gathered material from other officials, local judges and officers commanding in the cities. For an elaborate discussion

barbers , religious mendicants or *fakirs* etc. Together these formal and informal networks were threaded out into the wider society plying information rich trade between local communities and various regions.

For Bayly, any centralization of military or fiscal resources implies some prior collation of information and the knowledge to determine their optimal use. So such decentralized and covert agencies of information gathering such as spies , informers and collators of gossips who were at times outside the formal network of the state were more than useful adjuncts to power and legitimacy of the state that utilized them, infact they were integral to it .

To take Bayly's point a little further we can argue that similarly so these local agencies of policing like the *barkandazes* , *khojis* and *chaukidars* were a blend of formal and informal network and worked under both the government officials and private individuals and their functions contributed to local surveillance and control. These decentralized agencies were the overt networks of ^{pers}suasion and control that facilitated the channelization of information about the indigenous society for the emerging colonial regime. We have the local *chaukidars* and *barkandazes* operating as messengers and spies in their localities.

Such subaltern agencies also came to perform various fiscal and commercial duties besides surveillance and policing in their locality. They operated both as revenue collecting peons and as local watch and ward agencies. Speaking of their diverse roles W.W. Hunter⁹ talked of them being employed in duties such as 'assisting in collecting the rents , distraining the goods of the defaulters and to seeing that the ryot (*raiyat*- peasants) did not desert their lands'. In unimportant hamlets these sometimes operated with the local *thanadars* and helped in the realisation of miscellaneous imposts which the local *zamindars* levied. These rudimentary agencies were of various denominations in their localities comprising the regular police

see, Muhammed Zameeruddin Siddiqui, 'The intelligence service under the Mughals', *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 1972, pp53-66.

⁷ *Kasids* - was the Arabic term for runners.

According to C.A.Bayly , 'along with the provision of mints, or of rest house and *serais* for merchants, the smooth functioning and protection of the runner system was itself an important manifestation of successful kingship'. C.A.Bayly, 'Knowing the Country' , *MAS* (1993), p8.

⁸ *Harkaras* - literally meant 'do-all's', factotums these primarily were massangers or intelligence gatherers .

⁹ W.W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, (Calcutta, 1868 repr. 1972) p169.

force under *thanadars* or *darogahs* or acting as the local watchmen , or even as personal guards and retainers of the local *zamindars*, to being frontier police such as the *ghatwals* etc.

In the following pages we will analyse the interface of two such institutions — the *barkandazes* and *paiks* who functioned as local retainers cum armed peons and also about the *chaukidars* or the community watch and ward agency — with the early British state and study the changing perceptions of the mushrooming colonial regime towards these localised, subaltern institutions of control and policing.

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I

Barkandaz and Paik : In pre-colonial context

Both *Barkandaz* and *Paik* were indigenous terms that were used to denote the unorganised local agencies of policing and control under the early British rule in late 18th Century. These subaltern agencies of control had roots of their emergence in the *piyadas* of the Mughal army. In the Mughal infantry, which consisted of both matchlockmen and archers¹⁰ the term *piyada* was used for foot soldiers.

The mainstay of the Mughal army was its cavalry and the infantry units were relatively less significant. The *piyadas* mainly came from the lowest ranks of society¹¹ as compared to the other sections of the Mughal army. Hence inspite of being a part of the army they remained on the peripheries of Mughal militaristic culture. The early European observers commented on their lack of proper training and spoke of them having 'little sense of discipline'. They were considered the less reliable sections of the Mughal army that were deployed for 'civilian purposes'.¹² William Irvine in his study of the Mughal army concluded that it was basically an army of horsemen with the foot soldiers merely being "little more than a night watchman and a guardian over a baggage"¹³.

Barkandaz was a Persian term that was used to denote the matchlockmen of the Mughal times. The term was made up from *barq* which meant 'lightening' and *andaz* that stood for the 'one who casts'. Together the word literally meant 'the thrower or caster of lightening'. It was more of a title appreciatively associated with the foot soldiers using matchlocks at a time when fire arms were first introduced. But like many other Persian terms it was retained in India even after it had fallen into disuse in Persia. With the erosion of the

¹⁰ I.H. Qureshi , *The Administration of the Mughal Empire* (Patna , 1976) p132

¹¹ Ibid , Qureshi goes on to say that the better relatively higher classes of infantrymen were called '*nimah sawar*' (half troops) so that they be saved from the indignity of being considered as infantrymen p133

¹² Ibid , p133.

¹³ William Irvine , *The Army of the Indian Moghul* , (London , 1903) (reprint , New Delhi , 1972).p57

Mughal authority in the early 18th century the term as well as its constituents languished as inane section of the militaristic culture.

Though one does not come across many references to this term in the pre-colonial context perhaps it was a distinctive title for foot soldiers or the *piyadas* rather than a common administrative agency of later times. It was institutionalized as a civil and local agency of policing and control by the later half of 18th century. Since many *barkandazes* came from Buxar in Bihar the matchlockmen were also referred to as *baksariyas* when in 1756, Calcutta was threatened by the Company army Siraj-u-daula, the Nawab of Bengal made emergency preparation by collecting 'number of *buxerries*'¹⁴. They are described by Yule and Burnell, as being equivalent in meaning to *barkandaz* who came from 'Baksar' (Buxer) on the Ganges in 'Behar'.¹⁵ William Hodges, describes them as 'men who march on foot, armed with spear and matchlock ; their sabers and shields are flung across their backs. These are certainly valuable subjects for a sketch'.¹⁶

With the defeat in the battle of Buxar in 1764, the regional ruler of the successor states started the process of abandoning the obsolete modes of the warfare. This further eroded the militaristic association of the matchlockmen with the regional armies. The discardment of matchlock as weapon of militaristic combat contributed to the matchlockmen being perceived as militarily unworthy. The weapon on whose uses they subsisted was constitutional flawed. Being a fire arm ignited by a match which a matchlockmen had to keep alight without blowing himself up or burn himself while he stuffed loose powder, bullet and wad down the barrel of the gun, then bringing himself to aim and fire. The difficulty was how to access what to do with the matchlock in close combat, men not having three hands¹⁷. Some-

¹⁴ R. Orme , *Historical fragments of the Mogul Empire , of the Morattes and of the English concern in Hindostan from the year MDCLIX* (ed) J.P. Guha (London , 1974) Vol.II p59. Also see W. Irvine , *the Army of Indian Moguls*. p168

¹⁵ H.Yule and A. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson : A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian and Indian words and phrases*, (rev. ed., London, 1903), p32.

¹⁶ See the opposite page for that exquisite hand made of the *buxerries* by William Hodges. From his, *Travels in India 1780-1783*, (London, 1793), NAI, New Delhi, pp30-31.

¹⁷ Shelford Bidwell , *Swords for Hire : European mercenaries in Eighteenth Century India* (London , 1971) p56

Manucci describing a matchlock operation mentions that 'the women stood behind there husbands with spears and arrows - when the husband had shot off his matchlock , his wife handed him the lance , while she



A SEPOY MATCHLOCK MAN.

in the Service of the native

PRINCES of HINDOSTAN.

From, William Hodges, *Travels in India, 1780-1783*, (London, 1793).
Drawn from the *Life* by William Hodges, R.A. London,
Published by J. Edwards, Pall Mall on 11 Jan. by 1793, London.

times the more impetuous, it was observed, used to simply throw their matchlock away and charge. Hence matchlock came to be known as 'only a one shot weapon'¹⁸. It became heated after being fired once and had to be left to cool before it could be touched to be loaded again¹⁹

Paik was also a Persian that was a colloquial parlance of the *piyada*. The term combined the words *Pa*(foot) and *Yek* (one) together, contorting one (pair of) foot, it came to be used to denote footmen, who were good archers. The term was widely used in Eastern part of India mainly Bengal, Assam and Orissa region. By late 18th century just as *barkandaz* they also came to exist in the indigenous society as rudimentary militia retained for policing and other miscellaneous administrative duties.

Even in the pre-colonial context, the *paiks* were never associated with martial qualities or valour in *Riyaz-us-Salatin* a Persian document on the history of medieval Bengal, there is a reference to Bengal *paiks* in the reign of Sultan Ilyas Shah (c1353), the excerpts read,

“Bengal *paiks* who were for years dubbed themselves as ‘Abu Bangal’ and gave themselves martial airs proclaiming their readiness to sacrifice their lives for Ilyas Shah the ‘bang’ (*bhang*) eater came to attend upon that maniac of a monarch in the company of Bangali *rajahs* but at the time of actual warfare put from fear their fingers into their mouths, ceased to be on alert, threw down their swords and arrows, rubbed their foreheads on the ground and were all put to the sword”. (by the army of Emperor Firuz Shah Tughlaq)²⁰

Under Marathas by the late 17th Century and early 18th Century we come across *paiks* being maintained by the holders of big estates and *killahs* (forts) who were very influential in the local society, arms only big entourage and paying only fined revenues to the government under Marathas these *paiks* were send to perform military duties (as contributions of

reloaded the matchlock’. Nicolas Manucci , *Storia do Mogor or Mogul India (1653-1708)* , translated by W.Irvine , in 4 Vols , (London , 1907-1908) Vol I ,p134

¹⁸ Shelford Bidwell , *Swords for Hire* , p56

¹⁹ I.H. Qreshi , *The administration of the Mughal Empire* , p132

²⁰ Gulam Husain Salim , *Riyazu s- Salatin : A History of Bengal* , Translated into English by Maulana Abdul Saleem (Calcutta , 1904) p125 also see Zia-ud-din Barani , *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*. (Persian text) p593

their employing authority) during wartime but when peace was declared in the area they returned to their localities and performed policing duties for estates of the local land holders²¹

Unlike the *barkandazes* they were remunerated not in cash stipends but with rent-free lands for their maintenance. These were called '*paikan*' lands since *barkandazes* were given cash payments for their services they were also called *nagadees* (Persian for cash payment)²². Both *barkandazes* and *paiks* were collected together and operated in numbers being led by *dafadars*²³ and *mirdhas*²⁴ who were self styled *sardars* or leaders. They also played an active role in as an agent in accumulating them and acted in liaison with the employing authority.

BARKANDAZES & PAIKS AS LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY IN THE 18TH CENTURY

PRACTICE OF LOCALLY RETAINING MEN FOR POLICING AND CONTROL.

In the 1st half of the 18th century as the Mughal authority crumbled, the imperial political night was fractured. In this flux there were Periodic invasions of Afghans, Rohillas, Jats, Marathas. the consequent instability created problems for the channelization of revenue and disrupted trade routes. The need for armed men for escorting the immense traffic of traders, merchants, their agents on various routes escalated the regional politics came to have their own *paltans* (armies) were deployed for escorting *rajahs*, big *zamindars*, talukdars and merchants (both indigenous and Europeans) on surveys, trade, pilgrimage, political calls and other journeys. There was always demands to requisition for armed escorts . It is said that 'people never travel except in large parties or under the protection of armed men. Persons of rank were accompanied by their own retainers' and that 'indeed an armed retinue had become a necessity for every one who wished to make a figure on his travels'²⁵. It is said that for the

²¹ K.M.Patra , *Orissa under East India company* (New Delhi , 1971) p92

²² Basudev Chatterjee , *The Darogah and the countryside: The imposition of police control in Bengal and its impact* , *IESHR* , vol XVIII , No.1 ,(1981) p22-23

²³ *Dafadars* - made from Arabic word *dafah* meaning section and *dar* which in Persian means one who holds lan be translated as incharge of a section. In the context of barkandaze they are described as 'foreman of labourers'

²⁴ *Mirdhas* or leaders who were famous for raising men for escort duties. It is said that any journey seems to have been inconceivable without *mirdhas* and their men. D.H.A. Kolff , *Naukar , Rajput and Sepoy*. p5

²⁵ W.W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p 151

Europeans traveling the length and breadth of 'Hindustan', 'worse than the want of good roads was the danger of robbers'.²⁶ Tavernier tells us that 'he who desires to travel with honour in India sought to take with him twenty to thirty armed men, some with bows and arrows and other with muskets'.²⁷ Armed men like the *barkandaz* formed an essential part of any traveling entourage. William Hodges in his memoirs of the journey in Bengal and Bihar provides us with a descriptive picture of such a traveling party with its armed escorts. He says,

“throughout Bengal and Behar... it is extremely pleasant to observe the variety of travelers that are to be met with on the road ; either passing along in groups or under the shade of some spreading tree, by the side of wells or tanks. In one part may be seen the 'native soldiers' their half pikes sticking by their side, with their sabers and matchlocks. In an other part is perhaps a company of merchants engaged in calculations or of devotees in the act of social worship and in another the common Hindoo 'pallankeen' (palanquin) bearers baking their bread”.²⁸

In the context of Western India it is mentioned that there came to be groups like the *Qasbatis* who were basically camel drivers based in the *qasbas* or district towns of some importance and primarily operated in Gujrat region on the great caravan routes. Kolff describes them as 'Muslim Soldiers of Baluchi and Pathan origin' they were a powerful warlike body, that 'attacked villages, drove away cattle escorted *nazims*, took responsibility of collecting *peshkash* from the zamindars on a small salary, served the *faujdar*s and the *thanadars*'.²⁹ Till late 17th Century they did not accept service outside Gujrat. But later on by mid 18th Century some of them, finding themselves in reduced circumstances, tried their luck in other *S&S* *bash* and 'made bravery their profession'.

²⁶ William Crooke, *The North Western Province of India : Their History, Ethnology and Administration* (London, 1897), (Indian repr., New Delhi, 1975), p129.

²⁷ Jean- Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, trans. by Vincent Ball, 2 Vols., (2nd edn. by William Crooke London, 1925) (Indian repr., 1976), Vol II, p46.

²⁸ William Hodges, *Travels in India, 1780-1783*, p30

²⁹ D.H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy : The Ethnohistory of the military labour market in Hindustan 1450-1850*, (Cambridge, 1990) cf. W. Fosters, *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*, (London, 1921) p220/314.

The tremendous popularity of the indigenous practice of locally retaining men by district officials and influential men contributed to the making of the *barkandaz* and *paik* as rudimentary policing institutions in the course of 18th century. Men under such agency came to be 'entertained' and 'collected' for various needs under both official *thanadari* and private authorities like the local zamindars, rich merchants, big plantation owners, bankers, pilgrimage parties. They came to operate both as personal guards and local policemen.

These locally recruited men functioned as retainers of the paying authority and functioned in various capacities for their employers. But perhaps, calling them professional mercenaries would be drastic as more man often such agencies absorbed any 'loose', dispossessed men in need for labouring employment, who could muster up a sword or a spear and were willing to take orders. Sometimes even arms were also provided by their employers.³⁰

Such practice get a boost from the fact that there was never any death of loose characters ready to fight for the sake of plunder alone. The local influential zamindars had an establishment made up by such 'followers' who were 'ready to support them in any enterprise'.³¹ Even the early British administration were irked by the fact that anybody 'who consider arms to be their proper profession, think themselves justified in using them to extent the means of subsistence from those who have property when they have none and can no longer find what they consider to be other suitable employment.'³²

D.H.A. Kolff's study brings forth one crucial resourcefulness of man pouch factor in the late medieval north Indian state formation;³³ highlighting 'its surplus value as a source of power, besides the fiscal resource base. He brings forth the concept of flourishing 'military

³⁰ In this category came *charhetas* - a Hindi term used to denote footmen who receive small pay, arms and are mounted on their master's horses for purposes of escort duties. Their master provided the horses with coin and grass. see. M. Faiz Baksh, *Tarikh-i-Farabaksh*, Translated into English by William Hoey as *Memories of Delhi and Faizabad* (2 Vols, Allahbad, 1889), Vol II, p298

³¹ P.D. Reeves (ed), *Sleeman in Oudh*, p187

³² Ibid, p268 Curiously, unlike the early British efforts to curb the 'coercive' abilities of the local land controllers like the zamindars and *talluqadars* we do not come across many measures to systematically control the marginal, martial existence of such groups. Perhaps under the early British state their popular usage irregular agency of 'armed peons' emerged more as an effective vehicle of control and absorption of such displaced sections of the indigence with the developing colonial regime.

³³ D.H.A. Koff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy; the Ethnohistory of the military labour market in Hindustan*, (1450-1850), (Cambridge, 1990).

labour market' and talks of the immense reserves of armed men floating in various capacities. These were the large pool of semi-trained men of rural origin who always appear to be readily available for service in North India. According to him "there were more potential soldiers than those employed by the (Mughal) emperor".³⁴ Such free floating armed populace were "essentially free to become rebels as they were to turn auxiliaries".³⁵

According to Kolff, Indian agrarian society was to a very large extent an armed society. Skilled in the use of arms and it had very few men without at least a spear or bow and arrow. He mentions that the roots of the martial tradition were in villages and towns of Hindustan rather than in the army camps and he forwards the notion of a widely militarized indigenous society which is defined in terms of the concept of armed peasant. This armed peasantry was influenced by the martial tradition of his region undertaking the initiative of his own defence.³⁶ Martial sports were very much a popular part of the daily life of the villages. One such sport was *patahilana* a kind of athletic sword fighting.³⁷ It was famous that anyone who was a master of the art and could properly swing a '*patta*' (a wooden sword) was capable of stopping ten swordsmen from getting near him. Also popular among the lower classes of both Hindus and Muslims was *Rustam-Khani*, a kind of stick fighting.³⁸ It was said

³⁴ Ibid p3 Kolff says that there were frequent censuses of this 'military labour market' and these counts betrays an uneasy awareness of the problem of how to control these armed men.

³⁵ Ibid , p7 In this sense the 'millions of armed men', cultivators and otherwise that the government was supposed to rule over were its rivals rather than its subjects.

³⁶ Kolff, defines this notion of an armed society primarily in terms of the 'armed peasant'. This armed peasantry was both instruments of order and disorder. Hence the need of control and conciliation. Kolff shows the existence of a traditions of 'armed peasants' in Bhojpur region from the time of Emperor Sher Shah (1540-1545). From the mid 16th Century Mughal Emperors began to create specialised peasant armies by separating *naukari* (military service) from the agricultural responsibilities of the recruits. He goes on to show that despite the Mughal state's efforts to create 'peasant soldiers' the distinction between peasants and soldiers remained blurred even in the heydays of the Empire. But Kolff in his definition of armed society does not distinguish between an 'armed peasant' and a peasant soldier. By early 18th Century the regional state of Awadh and Benares adopted sophisticated techniques to recruit peasant from the country side and separate them from the civilian society, so as to be shaped into professional peasant soldiers. The 'military labour market' obtained a further fillip once the East India Company State starting recruiting from it for their colonial armies and irregular militias. For a detailed study see Seema Alavi, *The Sepoy and the Company*, chapter I and II, pp11-94.

³⁷ Ibid , p28 This was the popular parlance of *Shamshir zani* or sword exercise used in the army camps. Both the uses were promoted due to the popular belief that sword exercises kept the user physically fit and active.

³⁸ Ibid , the Persian *phankainti* which had influenced Arabs was known in India as *ali-mad* and in its Hindustani usage as *rustam-khani*. *Alimad* was for aristocratic classes. Its teachers never accepted people from the lower classes as their pupils. On the other hand *rustam khani* was common among the lower orders as they

that hundreds of teachers of this art were used to be found throughout the villages and towns of Awadh region. Men proficient in this art of combat were called '*lattials*' because they used bamboo sticks as defence tactics.³⁹ Then there was '*tir-andazi*' or archery that was supposed to be a special skill of low caste memals like Pasis and Bhars who came to be closely associated with *barkandazi* and *chaukidari* as institutions of policing.

The popularity of *akharas* or martial teaching centres that were the theaters for athletes and pugilists contributed significantly to keep martial tradition and spirit alive among the indigenous populace. Kolff says that martial exercise were a typical way of life⁴⁰ for a large sections of north Indian peasantry and "men were not only familiar with one of arms, but served as part time rebels and seasonal soldiers, retainers. Occasional income from such retaining may have enabled quite a number of people to survive a slack season.⁴¹ In time of dearth, or famine this 'mobility of labour' must have been a rule rather than exception⁴² Since a careful dosage of violence or a measured threat of arms was a necessary part of

went squabbling and fighting. Besides this and around Lucknow region there were other arts of combat like the *bank* (with knives) *benaut* (with stones) *Khusti* (wrestling) *barchcha* (with spear) *bana* (with cudgels) and *katan* (with stilettos) cf A.H.Sharar , *Guzashta Mashriqi Tammaddun ka akhri namah* , (Trans & ed by) F.Harcourt and F. Hussain as , *Lucknow : the past of Oriental Culture* , (reprint New Delhi , 1993)

³⁹ Zoe Yalland : *Traders and Nabobs : The British in Cawpore* (1765-1857) (London , 1987) European indigo planters in Kanpur region had 'a body of well trained *lattiwallahs* , who formed an essential part of their establishment'. In an incident narrated and indigo planter in Fatehgurh successfully utilised them in a skirmish with one of his tenants. p143

⁴⁰ Ibid p28

⁴¹ *Akharas* played an important role in organising local society. They were more than just physical fitness gymnasium. They provided one of the basic units for mobilizing participants in collective activities. They formed the basis of *goonda* (street ruffians) organisation that provided the marauding gangs during processions and gatherings. For an interesting account on *akharas* see. Sandria Freitag , *Collective Action And Community : Public Arenas and the emergence of Communalism in Northern India* (New Delhi , 1990) p121-122

Kolff , p29 "This is demonstrated by the connection between village sports and regional soldiering. Subahdar Sita Ram in his memoirs of life as sepoy in the service of the East India Company mentions that at the age of 17 when he had decided to become a Sepoy , he had to still spend some time in his native village near Ayodhya in Awadh region. During this time he did very little else than learn to wrestle (*kusti*) or play with the sword sticks

⁴² D.H.A. Kolff , *Naukar , Rajput , and Sepoy* , p1

He cites the example of 1630 famine of Gujrat , where a large party of weavers went to the Deccan wars and did not return for quite a while. This kind of mobility of labour made armed gangs an inseparable part of the country scene. If the food or pay offered were good , then men used to such martial duties tried their hand at occasional service with an officially maintained road *chauki* (check point) or with the local *faujdar*.

zamindari management. Hence such armed retainers became an inseparable part of the countryside in the pre-colonial and early colonial times.

There were numerous men seeking patronage and employment in both towns and countryside. It was observed that for every ten men that were wanted a hundred presented themselves in hopes of employment⁴³

Kolff suggests that a systematic popularization of notion of '*naukari*'⁴⁴ and '*namak*'⁴⁵ were ably utilised to adhere loyalty and unify allegiance with martial service in the medieval Indian military tradition. This gradually came to percolate and be initiated at various subordinate levels even after the fall of the Mughal Empire. Such concepts may have contributed in the growth of practice of retaining men and established *barkandaz* and *paik* as institutions of subaltern policing and control. Several individual contractors came to absorb such free floating populace seeking service in the flourishing 'military labour market'. But under a zamindari establishment retainers were more in the mould of lackeys or political followers henchmen who were assembled for all sorts deeds and dares for their master's *naukari* or service.

BARKANDAZ AND PAIKS : 'ARMED PEONS' OF THE EARLY BRITISH RULE

Barkandaz and *paiks* by late 18th and early 19th Century came to be associated with undisciplined, rudimentary ineffective, effete, armed populace accumulated as retainers of both official and individual contractors. They performed sundry duties of public administration besides policing their localities.

Barkandaz as an agency came to be intensively used under the early British rule. But the term, was retained more in jest of its bygone musketeering existence of Hindustan, armed with merely a sword and shield who could act in miscellaneous capacities as a peon, door-keeper, messenger, guard or escort. Though the term meant matchlockmen in Persian, para-

⁴³ M. Faiz Baksh, *Tarikh-i-Fara Baksh*, Vol II p130

⁴⁴ *Naukri* - the notion of allegiance through service that provided for the survival of the employed.

⁴⁵ *Namak* - the notion of loyalty to the salt of the employer.

doxically in the glossary prefixed to an address to the proprietors of the English East India Company stock in 1774 they were described as “foot soldiers whose common ‘arms are swords and targets only’⁴⁶

Barkandaz and *paiks* both came to be collectively classified as ‘armed peons’ in the early English documents and were associated with miscellaneous but invariably strenuous duties in the indigenous society. Their association with the *Barkandaz* began by early 18th century at the time when the Britishers operated primarily as merchants and commercial agents in the Indian countryside, they indiscriminately ‘entertained’ such floating agencies operating in localities frequented by them. We came across references to their usages in, for example debt realisation “with some severity”,⁴⁷ as guards in the godown and *aurungs*⁴⁸, or as escorts for the traveling parties of merchants and their goods,⁴⁹ loading and unloading goods on and off the carriages and ‘doolys’ (*dolis*), being in skirmishes with the attackers as self-styled soldiers.⁵⁰

By 18th century the practice of retaining men for adequate defence and protection was an established trend, an ensignia of power and authority of the possessor. Englishmen also came to popularly participate in this widespread practice. Besides them there were numerous influential men who deployed such agencies for their private and personal usages. Hence the nature of their service came to be determined by the needs of their retaining authority. *bar-kandazes* and *paiks* by late 18th century emerged as ambivalent ‘agencies of manipulation’ who came to contribute both in the upkeep of order and its disruption in the indigenous society.

On numerous occasions we come across various petitions of complaints, and accounts of them being involved in preying and pillaging. For example they got involved in local property disputes like one described in a letter from Basharat Khan, the *Vakil* of Alif Khan

⁴⁶ W. Irvine, *Army of Indian Moghuls*, cf. J.Z. Holwell, *Indian Tracts* (London, 1774) (3rd edition reprint 1924)

⁴⁷ C.R. Wilson (ed) *Early Annals of English in Bengal*, 4 Vols (first pub. 1911, reprint New Delhi, 1983) Vol II part II p10. The mentioned incident occurred in Patna in December 1714

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p3

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p43 dated 6 June 1715 describing a Journey from Musanagar to Sarai. Ekdil

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p9 also there is reference to armed peons cleaning houses for the storage of liquors.

the elder son of the deceased zamindar Khuda Nawaz Khan of *pargana* Atia in Mymensingh, East Bengal in 1788. In the property dispute that ensued between the sons, the *mahajan* of the disputed estate also put forward his claim. The letter mentions, he collected some *barkandazes* and “they took possession of the village *pargala* where stood the ancestral house of the late zamindar and laid waste the entire property. They were so boisterous that when the mother of the deceased Imam Baksh (the younger son of zamindar) went to the place in order to bring his body in a proper manner they did not allow her to see the face of her dead son and themselves buried the body.”⁵¹

In another incident a letter describes that the *naib* (deputy) of zamindar of *pargana* Jahangirpur, in Bengal was raising *barkandazes* to attack and destroy saltpetre factory at Sheoganj at his master’s behest. The Governor General was asked to stop and instruct the Magistrate to apprehend the ‘criminals’ and ‘send them to the court of Mohammed Reza Khan to stand trial there’.⁵²

The letter described that Lakhi Narain Chaudhari the *naib* of the zamindar Kashinath Roy ‘collected together four to five hundred *barkandazes*, peons and others, all of them armed, and made an unprovoked attack upon the factory of Sheoganj, belaboured the *gumashta*, and *amlahs* (deputies) of the factory, killing one of them and plundered all the money and material that were stocked in the factory.’⁵³

‘ARMED PEONS’ AND THE EARLY COLONIAL RULE IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY

The British by late 18th century as administrators of an incipient colony came to be gravely concerned about the quality of such rudimentary subaltern ‘agencies of manipulation’ and concerned themselves to reduce the flexibility in the indigenous operation of *barkandaz* and *paiks* as both agencies of policing and pillaging.

⁵¹ *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol 8, (1788-1789) letter no. 208 dated 27 Feb 1788, p84

⁵² Ibid, Chaitan Singh, the *mahajan* and Dhokhal Singh the leader of the *barkandazes* were notorious for skirmishing activities with their party and making unprovoked attacks.

⁵³ From, Nawab Mubarak-ud-Daula to, the Governor General in Council. In the *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol 8 (1788-1789), letter no. 629, dated 14 August 1788. p259

Such concerns of the colonial administrators in line with their ambitions to monopolise all 'the legitimate instruments of coercion'.⁵⁴ Hence they decided to crackdown on such double-edged agencies. This transpired resolutions against resorting to 'indiscriminate' and 'hasty' levies of such 'irregulars' by the officers of the Company state.⁵⁵ Under the British regime the use of 'irregulars' for ad-hoc or active military duties at times of war was discouraged and discontinued as an indigenous practice of their predecessors. The Company state striped to build its own strong and disciplined imperial army of regular soldiers and made it acquire an enviable reputation.

As a part of the process that John McLane has called the 'demilitarization of zamindars',⁵⁶ the local retainers composed by these agencies were targeted for either disbandment or disarmament. Bernard Cohn in his observation about the modes of early British state formation mentions that "in every area the British brought under control, they forced the disbandment of local military forces and systematically destroyed the forts and fortified houses of local land controllers".⁵⁷ This was 'deemed of the utmost consequence to the introduction of good policing'.⁵⁸ The Burdwan and Dinajpur Raj of big zamindars provides cases to this point. The zamindar *rajah* of Burdwan who had considerable number of retainers, was asked to reduce them considerably as a consequence of this measure it was reported, 'the number of his retainers were reduced to about 1/4th of what it used to be and that they now consisted of

⁵⁴ Such notions underwrote a concept of sovereignty in which any kind of public display of force and violence was inimical to the bureaucratic and centralising tendency of the Company's administration and included the rights to wield force to administer justice and to award punishments. For such issues see Radhika Singha , The Privilege of taking life : Some 'anomalies' in the Law of Homicide in the Bengal Presidency , *IESHR* , 30 ,2(1993) p182

⁵⁵ From , Lt. F. Young , Commanding Irregulars at Camp Nowne (Naini) To. William Fraser, Agent to the Governor General , the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, Ld. 26 Feb. 1815 , Foreign Dept. Secret Branch (S.C) , 4 April 1815 , No.13 , NAI , New Delhi. The letter illustrated a sketch of irregulars 'raised on the spur of the moment', 'unavoidably open to fellows of all coasts , who could procure arms'.

⁵⁶ J.R. Maclane , 'Revenue farming and the Zamindari system in Eighteenth Century Bengal' in R.E. Frykenberg (ed) , *Land Tenure and Peasant in South Asia* , (New Delhi , 1977) p20

⁵⁷ Bernard S. Cohn , *India : The Social Anthropology of a Civilization* (New Jersey , 1971) p80

⁵⁸ From J. Routledge , Magistrate To Grame Mercer , Esq. Secretary to the Honorable Lt. Governor of the Ceded Districts in Oudh , dated 29 March 1802 , Almorah. In G.N. Saletore (ed) *Henry Wellesley's Correspondence* p22

The letter suggested that the forts in the district be levelled as they were the zamindari asylums to retire in order to evade the authority. *Ikrarnamah* (consent deeds) were to be signed for such demolition measures within stipulated time.

persons of distinction who for several generations had shown due attachment to his house ... (and) if even they were (also) thrown out of employment they will in consequence die of starvation.”⁵⁹ In the case of Dinajpur zamindari too, the numbers of zamindari *paiks* were considerable reduced.

It is mentioned that the early colonial administrators were irked by the practice of the ‘persons of property’ being under the habit of keeping guards and ‘generally dressing them in red coats with facing on the lines of a regular soldier of the Company’. Through an order it was asserted that since ‘the colour of their (zamindari retainers’) dress was the most essential part of it and carried more authority with it as the majority of the inhabitant of the country could not discriminate the intricacies between the several uniforms.” The administrators decided to strictly prevent the use of red or scarlet for the uniform of the retained men under the indigenous authorities.⁶⁰

THE EARLY BRITISH POLICY OF RESUMPTION OF RENT-FREE LANDS OF ZAMINDARI RETAINERS AND ITS EFFECTS.

The process of ‘demilitarization’ of zamindars was also accompanied by the drive for the resumption the rent-free lands of their retainers. The resumption of their service tenures called ‘*paikan*’ lands was a move that triggered a spate of volatile rebellions by these disbanded local retainers, like the *ghatwal* outbreak in Birbhum⁶¹ in 1788 and the ‘*chaur*’ rebellion in Midnapur in 1799.⁶²

⁵⁹ From the Calendar of Persian Correspondence , Vol 6 (1781-1785) letter No.76 , dated 13 Feb 1781 , pp28-29

⁶⁰ From , W. Edmonston , the Board of Trade , Fort William , To Edward Hay , Secretary to the Government. MDP , 14 July 1790 , No. NAI , New Delhi.

⁶¹ Aditee Nag Chowdhary -Zilly , *The Vagrant Peasant : Agrarian Distress and Desertion in Bengal (1770-1830)* (Wiesbaden , 1982)

- The insurrection of 1789 in Birbhum originated from the grievances of the disbanded *ghatwals* (Supra note - Chapter 2) of the Birbhum Raj,. under the leadership of Mohammed Bahadur-al-Aaman Khan. Since they guarded the *ghats* (passes) against raiders they were granted rent-free land called the *ghatwali* tennure , in lieu of their pay. p126

⁶² Besides these there was also the *Paik* rebellion in Orissa in 1817 against the resumption of their lands there. After the Rebellion the Government had to return the resumed *paikan* lands. See K.M.Patra , *Orissa Under East India Company* (New Delhi , 1971) p91-97

The retained irregulars of local (zamindari) *rajas* of Midnapur described as bandits by W.K. Ferminger in the district records of Midnapur. These *paiks* resisted the Company's measures and were a constant source of trouble for its officials. Hence they were popularly termed as '*chaur*' or 'outlandish' fellows in the official correspondence. Amongst these *paiks* of Midnapur were the tribals residing in the Jungle Mahal (the sparsely populated region of Western Midnapur). These were employed as freebooters by the local zamindars and were granted payment in kind or practically rent-free land for their services. The Company state decided to disband these *paiks* and resume their rent-free lands which were well cultivated ready to yield.

The early British policy of land resumption initiated by the 'Baze Zameen Duftar' (office of resuming rent-free lands) after 1785 was in line with Company's main concern to discover new sources of revenue. This made them resume the lands of the discarded *paiks* who were regarded as being locally dangerous and 'militarily unworthy'.⁶³

In the revel that ensued as a consequence, the *tehsildars* of the resumed *paikan* lands were the targets of the wrath and were threatened with death. The main resentment of the disposed *paiks* was against the Company's policy of revenue collection. The rebels therefore tried to hinder the revenue collection process. Even though officially pacified in 1801, reports of *chaur* raids were recorded as late as 1807-1808.

At the official level too the usages of such rudimentary agencies for administration and policing was proposed to be intensively curtailed. There were resolutions that envisaged "Sebundy corps, to be substituted in lieu of the regular troops, 'bukandosses' and armed peon"⁶⁴ It was felt that since it was already resolved that regular troops of the Company army shall be relieved from the performance of the detached '*mufassil*' (country) duties on which they were commonly employed and having considered the inefficiency of the *burkandazes* or the armed peons in comparison, it was underlined that 'Sebundy corps shall be used as far as

⁶³ Aditee Nag Chowdhary -Zilly , *The vagrant peasant*: p130

- Under Cornwallis Regulation No.1 Chapter 4 , Section 8 of 1793 the Company declared that the Governor General in Council reserved to himself the full right to resume such lands. Accordingly , Dowdeswell , the Principal collector started resuming lands belonging to *paiks* of Midnapur. The *paiks* were now called upon to pay rent according to the normal Permanent Settlement rates for lands they had held for generations.

⁶⁴ From , Edward Hay , Secretary to the Government To , the Governor General in Council , MDP , dated 29 June 1795 , NAI ,New Delhi.

possible to discharge the Mufassil duties now performed by the regular troops and Burkandosses peons'⁶⁵.

The *barkandazes* and *paiks* formed a significant part of local policing establishment. They formed the subaltern part of the local *thanadari* establishment, and the office of *kotwali* and Company *darogha* and their complete dispensation was an expensive, insurmountable and almost impossible measure to fulfill due to their deep entrenchment in the indigenous society. The British administrators eventually decided to exercise mere modifications in their wide spread use of 'irregulars' under the Company officials. The Company administrators made the employing officials give 'an account of the number of peons' that were 'absolutely' and 'indispensably needed' in writing for their employment. It was also stated that such 'irregular men' were to be selected from 'the reduced Sebundy and are to wear a badge to distinguish themselves from others on private service'.⁶⁶

As a measure to control the menacing drives of men from these 'irregular agencies' of local policing doubling as local henchmen and ruffians of the influential people, the British resorted to the practice of sometime detaining their families in case they eluded after committing acts of violence⁶⁷ The *barkandazes* and *paiks* continued as subaltern agencies of policing and control. These 'irregulars' came to constitute the 'regular' sections of local policing establishments. The organised 'Sebundy Corps', though never replaced these individualistic and personalised agencies of control but operated as a supplementary and balancing force of para-military nature. By early 19th century it was emphasized that *Sihbandis* and *najibs* were to act 'in concert with the ordinary police as occasion arose'.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ From Edward Hay, Secretary to the Government, To the collectors of various Residencies (Circular notice), MDP, 6 July 1795, No.2, NAI, New Delhi.

⁶⁶ C.H. Phillips & B.B. Misra (eds), *Fort William - India, House Correspondence* (Foreign, & Secret Series) Vol.XV (1782-1786), NAI, (New Delhi, 1963) correspondence dated 25th March 1785, To the Court of Directors, paragraph 73, p394.

⁶⁷ Y.J. Taraporewala (ed), *Fort William - India House Correspondence* (foreign, political & Secret Series) Vol XVII (1792-1795) NAI, (New Delhi, 1955) p271
This forms the part of a political letter addressed to the Court of Directors, Ld. 18 March 1793, paragraph 108. It describes the disturbances created by *barkandazes* from Bengal employed in Assam. To catch these absconding men the wives and families of some of men were sent to Cooch - Behar and detained there.

⁶⁸ G.N. Saletore (ed), *Henry Wellesley's Correspondence* (1801-1803) *Selection from English Records Series No.2*, U. P. State Records, NAI, (New Delhi, 1955) p.

At times *barkandazes* were even enlisted as Sepoys or privates of the 'Sebundy Corp'. By an order in the late, 18th Century it was recommended that while raising *sihbandis* preference be given to the *barkandazes* and families known and residing in the respective districts.⁶⁹ But even with such measures *barkandaz* retained a separate identity as an agency and the subalterns of the 'Sebundy Corp' were called Sepoys or privates and not *barkandazes*.

⁶⁹ Minutes and Resolution of the Governor General of Council , dated 29th June 1785, IOLR , London.

II

CHAUKIDAR : THE INSTITUTION OF LOCAL WATCHMAN AND POLICING IN LATE 18TH AND EARLY 19TH CENTURIES

The institution of local watchman was addressed by miscellaneous technology. They were referred to as *mustafizans*, *guzarbans*, *rahdaras*, *nigahbans*, 'pasbans'⁷⁰ 'goraits', 'kotal's' but by far the most popular title associated with them — which was often used in the official British documents — was the *chaukidars* or the keeper of police post or station.

Interestingly, because of the close interlinkages of policing and revenue collection the local watchman was a policing and surveillance agency by nightfall but was a constituent of the local revenue collecting entourage by day time.

Even though it was a traditional institution and existing in almost every locality whether villages, towns or the mushrooming *qasbahs*⁷¹. The term *chaukidar* came to be increasingly identified in its rural policing network. The early part of the village policing network. The early colonial administrators acknowledged its significant role in policing of the country but at the same time criticized its contemporary predicament as an effective institution of public administration. The institution was called the 'real backbone of the indigenous police system'⁷² but simultaneously serious doubts were cast over its efficiency. This was because it came to be predominantly constituted by certain low caste 'suspect' populace

⁷⁰ 'Pasban' - This was the term for the local *chaukidar* mainly used in the Awadh region where there was the concentration of low caste community of Pasis (Supra note 136 in chapter two). The large scale employment of Pasis as *chaukidars* made their community's name synonymous with the institution of watchman. Pasban was possibly a derivation (colloquial) from the term Pasi Combined with 'ban' (meaning 'to become' in Hindustani) literally equating 'to become a Pasi' with being 'a watchman'.

⁷¹ There were *chaukidars* in the *Mohullas* (localities) of city and *Qasbahs* (small townships). There they were maintained by *Mohulladars* (persons incharge of the neighborhood corporations) and patrolled the streets of residential complexes and *ganjs* (wholesale markets). The British by early 19th Century decided to levy a House Tax to support the local watch-and -ward agency in various cities, but this was widely rejected. For a discussion on such protest movement in Benares see the conclusion.

⁷² This was said by H. Ricketts, the Magistrate of Cuttack, in 1827. From K.M.Patra, *Orissa under East India Company*, (Delhi, 1971) p95.

who came to be particularly associated with it as 'professional' *chaukidars*⁷³. These were the groups that the colonists wanted police and control.

PRE-COLONIAL LINEAGE OF THE INDIGENOUS INSTITUTION OF LOCAL WATCHMAN

The institution had a traditional origin in the villages under the principle of local responsibility, which was the conventional mechanism for suppression of crime. By its security, order and peace at the village level was a matter of collective responsibility thrown upon the village community being governed by the village *panchayat* with the village headman as its leader who was responsible for its enforcement. This necessitated a subordinated delegation of charge which initiated the practice of keeping inferior assistants as watchmen for the entire village. Even though theoretically there was to be only one watchman in every village but their numbers fluctuated depending on the size of the village. He was the servant of the entire village community which paid for his upkeep by doling out certain portions of produce in kind and also by granting him a patch of land which came to be called '*Chakran lands*' for his dwelling of which the rest he could cultivate too.

Traditionally his duties included to keep watch at night, find out about all arrivals and departures observe all the strangers and report all the suspicious persons and activities to the headman. He was required to note the character of each man in the village and if theft or other crime was committed in the village it was his duty to detect the culprit. His duties were a blend of both surveillance and detection.

The institution existed in a more or less hereditary framework as we come across references that on several occasions the local village watchman was assisted by all the male members of his family.

⁷³ In this category came Dusadhs and Dhanuks of Bihar and Pasis of Awadh. William Crooke described them as 'full blooded dravidian who had sunk to the level of serfs and menials'. Dhanuks and Dosadhs, played drums at weddings, and also were landless labourers by day time but were most identified as village watchmen. For details see William Crooke, *Races of Northern India*, (Indian repr. New Delhi, 1973) H.H. Risley, in his various classifications of castes while describing the 'functional caste' said that 'almost every caste professed to have a traditional occupation, so ... Ahir by tradition are herdsmen, brahmins are priests, chamars and mochis are leather workers, the dosadhs were village watchmen and messengers'. H.H. Risley, *People of India*, (London, 1898), pp74-75. Also see, William Crooke, *Tribes and castes of the North West India*, 4 Vols., (repr, New Delhi, 1975).

Though the exact period of 'ancient' emergence is not very clearly traceable but we do come across references to in the description of a well governed villager in the several work on policy and governance by Chankya titled '*Arthashastra*'⁷⁴ written during the Mauryan period.

Under the Muslim rule of the Delhi Sultans and the Mughals the zamindars emerged as a counter force of power in the country side that shattered the balance of governance between the government official and village community. The 'local responsibility' of revenue collection and policing came to be combined and was entrusted to zamindars who were systematically united with the Mughal state as formal intermediaries in the power hierarchy dissolving from the emperor day and night in the country side by constituting their own establishment of large number of privately retained men for such duties and the local village watchman came to be under the zamindar authority. He came to be appointed, maintained and subordinated by the zamindar of his locality as the servant of his establishment. He was no longer hereditary and held his office from and was answerable to the landholder, not to the village community.

CHAUKIDARS AND THE EARLY BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

The British saw the local watchman as the foundation and the operational base of rural policing in India, a steadfast institution by nonetheless a concerted one, due the inefficiency of its constituents and controlling authority for that they were brandished as 'leaders of criminal gangs'⁷⁵ all being 'simply' useless. As a significant part of the local administration the government pronouncement on the local watchmen were effusive of their praise a typical one described *chaukidars* as "foundation of all possible police in this country"⁷⁶ The British were fascinated with its flexibility and versatility as the "chowkidar was a man of the village not enough of an official to be alien from the villagers and enough of an official amenable to

⁷⁴ Arthashastra of Chankya or Kautilya was supposed to have been written during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (c.321-297 B.C.) but was compiled a few Centuries after the Mauryan rule. Though there is a controversy over its date and authorship but some of its books contain genuine, authentic information about the Mauryan administration

⁷⁵ Anand A. Yang, *The Limited Raj*, p106 cf. *The Special Committee on the 'Mufussil Police' West Bengal in 1837-1838*.

⁷⁶ Anand Yang, *The Limited Raj*, cf. and address of Lt. Governor of Bihar, at Saran District in 1856. The address goes on to mention 'upon their renovation improvement and stability ... the ultimate success of all our measures for the benefits of the country in the prevention detection and punishment of crime' (rests) p103

the system for its duty.”⁷⁷ But on the other hand they were also classified as a ‘mere mob wholly ignorant of the esprit-de-corps strangers to professional pride...not to be relied upon in any emergency, unwilling to exercise such detective ability as they possess, the plunderer rather than protector of the people, and abettors rather than the suppressors of crime’.⁷⁸ Such contrasting perceptions provided the British colonising ambitions with purposeful interference to set things right.

The colonial administrators realised that as an indigenous institution with vestiges of ancient tradition embedded in its very existence it could not be dispensed away and so in their bid to reduce the retainers of the zamindari establishment did not include the ‘local chowkidar’. The continued usage of the colloquial Hindawi parlance to designate this institution even in the official transcripts and correspondence were enforcements of the Orientals favour of the early British rule. But the Anglicizing wave did induce the administrators to shift its allegiance in the local society from the local zamindar to the recently appointed Company darogah. This shedding was a bid to restore its credibility in its sphere of existence.

CHAUKIDARS AND THE COMPANY DAROGAH : CORNWALLIS REFORMS IN BENGAL COUNTRYSIDE

The British emphasized the need to unite the indigenous institution of *chaukidari* with its systematic ways were sought for ‘assimilating’⁷⁹ it more nearly to the general system of police it still was supposed to maintain its localised character. As a government official with localised character, the *chaukidar* was to be an effective policing agency of the colonial regime.

The British started by formally putting him under subordination of the newly appointed Company *darogah*. This was entailed by the Cornwallis systems in the countryside

⁷⁷ Basudev Chatterjee , *A study in the Police administration of West Bengal* , (Calcutta , 1973) cf. the Report of Police Commission of 1861 (Calcutta , 1862) , p48

⁷⁸ W.W. Hunter , *Annals of Rural Bengal (1765-1790)* ,(Calcutta , 1868). He goes on to say that ‘the rural police bequeathed to us form an enormous ragged army who eat up the industry of the province ...In London the police constitutes a force’ , p173

⁷⁹ K.K.Datta (ed), *Selections from Unpublished Correspondence between Judge-Magistrates and the Judge of Patna. (1790-1857)*, (Patna, 1954), cf. Extract of the Resolution From the Government of 27th June, 1822, p214.

of Bengal in 1793.⁸⁰ The measure was legislated by Regulation XXII section XIII of 1793 that removed the local policing functions from the authority of the zamindars. Away from, the control of the zamindar the *chaukidar* was now to function under the Company *darogah* and the purview of the District Magistrates.

According to the regulation the watchman had to apprehend and send to the *darogah* any person who may be taken in the act of committing murder, robbery, housebreaking or theft or against whom hue and cry had been raised. Besides functioning as a local arresting authority. The regulation emphasized that they had to convey intelligence of any robber concealed in their respective locality or country adjacent, and also of any vagrant or other person who may be lurking about the country, without any ostensible means of subsistence who could not give a satisfactory account of themselves. They came to have surveillance functions.

The *chaukidar* was supposed to cease to be obliged to zamindar and was to be transformed as a public servant of the British administration as the British arrived to project it as localised keeper of law and order not as a servant of the zamindari establishment or the village community.

In spite of such measures Cornwallis regulations left much to be desired. Even though the zamindars were deprived of their traditional prerogative pertaining to policing their localities, they were at the same time allowed to retain some control over the local watchman. This landed the government in an anomalous situation.

Even if the regulation resolved that the *darogah* was to be the controller of the local watchman and was to “keep a register of their name” but upon “the death or removal of any of them” it was the landholder to whom the filling up of the vacancies belonged. He was to

⁸⁰ According to Regulation XXII Section XIII of 1793 initiated by Lord Cornwallis administration “ All *paiks* , *chokidars* , *pausbans* , *dusauds nigahbans* , *harees* , and other descriptions of village watchmen are declared subject to the orders of the *darogah*.” From , *The Regulations and laws Enacted by the Governor General in Council for the Civil Government of the whole of the territories under the Presidency of Fort William , Bengal* , (Calcutta , 1827) , NAI , New Delhi

“send the names of the persons whom they may support to the *darogah* of the jurisdiction”⁸¹ who registered them in his books under his authority.

There were complaints regarding the system of village watch. Its reliability was questioned as the local watchman was portrayed as a ‘servant of two masters’. He owed his appointment to the local zamindar but was subject to report and function under the magistrate. His utilisation by the local zamindar as a revenue collection securing agency during the day left him over burdened for his night policing duties. It was felt that the *darogah* could only ‘get out of him a few sleepy rounds’⁸²

J. Brooke in a report on the police of *zillah* Hooghly⁸³ (dated Nov. 1799) sum up the root of this anomaly “the appointment and removal of these chowkidars centered with the landholders they are waked up by the chowkidars as their immediate principals and they are liable to be removed by them at pleasure, frequently the authority with which the *darogahs* are invested over them, is of secondary consideration and almost nugatory one’.

The Regulation XXII section XIV brought in the measure of punishment of the local policing agency of the *chowkidar*⁸⁴. Their “neglect and connivance was to be punished by fine, by imprisonment in irons, or by several corporal punishments. This ‘responsibility’ was ‘necessary’, as besides the usual temptations to neglect, the watchman is often himself a thief”⁸⁵. This initiated the measure of making them accountable to the ‘rule of law’ as ‘public servants’ But this invariably remained out of their purview of the Magistrate in practice. The

⁸¹ Ibid , It further mentioned that on the lack of performance of effective duties the *chowkidars* shall be “dismissed from their station by the landholders or other persons by whom they may be employed upon the requisition of the Magistrates.” This gave the local zamindars effective control over both the appointment and dismissal of the *chowkidars* , who became by all means a subordinate part of the zamindari establishment like the *piadas* or *paiks* (servants or peons).

⁸² W.W. Hunter , *The Annals of Rural Bengal* , p172.

⁸³ Basudev Chatterjee , “the *Darogha* and the Countryside ,” *IESHR* , (1987) , p36

⁸⁴ According to the Cornwallis Regulations the *chowkidars* were to be “punished as the law may direct , should it be proved that they assisted in labouring or concealing any of the offenders or suspected persons or connived in any respect at their practice”. From , *Regulations and laws Enacted by the Governor General* (Calcutta , 1827) , NAI , New Delhi. (supra note __)

⁸⁵ Extract from *History of Police Organisation in India and Indian village Police*— being select chapters of the report of Indian Police Commission of 1902-1903, (published by University of Calcutta, 1913) NAI, New Delhi.

chaukidars were appointed by local zamindars and were in pacification of them for their continued existence. We find the Magistrate complaining that they could not punish the police departmentally and that every village watchman could still operate even on a levels without running any risk of state trials under the zamindar's protection.

MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY OF 1822 : BRITISH CONCERNS ABOUT CHAUKIDARI

As we have discussed before the early British approach was fraught with a paradoxical mixture. So while there was praise for its traditionality as an institution (originator of rural policing mechanisms) there was also disgust for its 'contemporary' proportions (concepted constituents).

The Inquiry of 1822 into the institution of village watchman who were described as "useful and meritorious but unfortunate and ill used race...the only vestige of the primeval Hindoo institution of police"⁸⁶ according to the Anand Yang this was in the wake of the alarming rise of highway robbery in 1822-1823 which prompted the British to assess their policing mechanisms specially in the province of Bihar⁸⁷. This can be clearly assessed from the fact that the Inquiry investigated into the possibilities to strengthen this mechanism by means of increasing emoluments. Hence, it looked into the possibility of authorizing "the village watchman to levy from 'beoparries' or merchants and other opulent travelers a certain fee or percentage in requital for their trouble in guarding them during the night at the village where they may put in order to render them in greater degree responsible for their protection than they (the *chaukidars*) are at present."⁸⁸ There did exist a popular practice of tipping the watchman with little money for him to pay more attention to secure the payee's belongings at

⁸⁶ K.K.Datta (ed), *Selections from Unpublished Correspondence between Judge-Magistrates and the Judge of Patna*, (1790-1857), (Patna, 1954), cf. Extract of the Resolution From the Government of 27th June, 1822, p214.

⁸⁷ Anand A. Yan, *The limited Raj*, According to him these depredations prompted the Judges of Saran and Champaran districts to organise an establishment of 78 *chaukidars*. These were to be stationed at strategic points on the high roads but according to him this was a temporary measure p105.

⁸⁸ K.K.Datta (ed), *Selections from Unpublished Correspondence between Judge-Magistrates and the Judge of Patna*, (1790-1857), (Patna, 1954), cf. Extract of the Resolution From the Government of 27th June, 1822, p214. Also see, A. Shakespear (ed), *Duncan Records Selections*, 2 Vols., (Benares, 1873) Vol II chapter/section on the Settlement of Benares Province, NAI, New Delhi, pp126-127.

the various *serais* (road side rest houses) during the night In an account it is referred that “one or two watchmen keep watch in the roadside ‘sarae’ at nights, and those travelers who have ‘bahlees’ and wagons full of articles of merchandise and other things have generally to pay a trifle (about a pie) to the watchman before they leave the place”⁸⁹.

Besides this the inquiry elucidated upon some other important issues that concerned the government regarding this local institution of police. They were its penalty, exploitation maintenance and distribution. These were to effectively gear the institution with the general network of policing of the colonial administration.

The inquiry stressed that the best mode of increasing the efficiency of village watchman was to call “forth their exertions and protecting them against the oppression of the zamindars and thanadars” with the regulation of the degree of exercise over them. It was felt that “probably a peremptory prohibition against their employed in revenue matters...would be of great service”⁹⁰ As it was felt that “one of the causes which has done much to degrade the village *chaukidar* in his own esteem and that of the public and to lessen his influence for good, has been the habit too common of treating him as a beast of burden and a menial servant.”⁹¹

But since their emoluments were meager they were forced to undertake other works in the locality to augment their income. Hence the inquiry also pruned into “the allocation of quantity of land, money or grain allotted to their yearly support, seeking to specify modes in which such contribution in money, grain are assessed and levied on inhabitants.”⁹² By this it sought to illustrate upon best mode of obtaining and securing lands for such watchmen as did not at present possess as well as to look into ‘ways of inducing the inhabitants to make con-

⁸⁹ Rev Ishuree Dass, *Domestic Manners and Customs of the Hindoos of Northern India*, (Benares, 1886) CSL, New Delhi , p251.

⁹⁰ K.K.Datta (ed), *Selections from Unpublished Correspondence between Judge-Magistrates and the Judge of Patna*, (1790-1857), (Patna, 1954), cf. Extract of the Resolution From the Government of 27th June, 1822, p214.

⁹¹ Basudev Chatterjee , *A study in the Police administration of West Bengal* , (Calcutta , 1973) cf. the Report of Police Commission of 1861 (Calcutta , 1862) , p49-50

⁹² K.K.Datta (ed), *Selections from Unpublished Correspondence between Judge-Magistrates and the Judge of Patna*, (1790-1857), (Patna, 1954), cf. Extract of the Resolution From the Government of 27th June, 1822, p213.

tribution for their support in money and grain in those villages where such a practice is not steadily established".⁹³

The inquiry meddled with the issue of colonial mechanisms of penalty as it questioned the issue of corporal punishment authorized for *chaukidars* as 'public servants' which it said was 'frequently inflicted on very slight suspicion. These concurs bring out the close inter-linkages of penalty mechanisms and colonial administration even reflecting upon the frequent fluctuations occurring in the issue of policy debate on such an issue.

By 1812, contrary to such concerns we find resolution suggesting that for neglect and inattention chowkidar should be punished with 'few rattans'⁹⁴ instead of fine or imprisonment as these would 'be better alternatives' as 'these people were so poor that they cannot afford to pay a fine if they do a further mischief to reimburse themselves is the certain consequence.'⁹⁵ and 'if they are confined they suffer neither inconvenience nor disgrace for they possess at home no comfort nor they have any caste or reputation to loose during their confinement'⁹⁶

⁹³ *ibid*, p214

⁹⁴ Rattans was an instrument widely used for flogging by the British administration. It was used to inflict the 'corporal pain' through the 'Cat' (*Kaath*-Hindawi term for a sturdy, good quality wood). It consisted of five strips of leather fastened to short wooden handle, in comparison to the traditional *korah* that had a single lash.

⁹⁵ From A. Fortescue, Magistrate of Patna Court to Dowdeswell, Secretary to Government, Fort William, Ld. 21 Dec 1811, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultation, dated 19 September 1812 No.18, IOLR, London. As a result Dowdeswell requests Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces to submit a draft of rules etc. for punishment of village watchman.

⁹⁶ D. Bhanu, *History and Administration of the North Western Indian Province, (1803-1858)*, (Agra, 1957), p226. cf. Judicial (Criminal) Report for 4th quarter of 1838, Home Miscellaneous Records, No.2, 27th March 1838, NAI, New Delhi.

This was in context of debates between the Chief Commissioner and Judicial Commissioner of Oude region, in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces. It was felt that the great poverty of a vast majority of people living on the brink of subsistence level from hand to mouth will adversely affect the deterrence value of prison life. It was underline that the majority of people in Oudh region were very poor and the prisoners were given adequate rough diet, which otherwise most of them could not afford by their honest labour. As the majority of men in the prisons of the region could not have afforded to by wheat which was a regular item of food supplied in prison the imprisonment of such people was an advantage to them and not a deterrent. It was said that added to this the natural calamities made jails seem more like destitute camps. These officer questioned the relevance of imprisonment as a penal mechanism for such categories of populace in comparison to Corporal punishments which seemed a better option. It was felt that in times of agricultural distress the jails acquired the character of extensive 'poor houses' than penal institution.

also 'maternal interruption takes place in the receipt of information & protection they ought to afford.'⁹⁷

The issue of corporal punishment was always a controversial territory under the colonial regime because of its association with public spectacle & deterrence value, it was thought to provide a harsh usage to colonial justice. Radhika Singha highlights that colonial policy on it varied and there were different phases in their approach towards the issue.⁹⁸ By 1820s and 1830s it had become an important subject of discussion and queries were being raised about its close association with penal regime of the Company with concerns about implications of 'torture' implicit in it. There were arguments about whether it should be replaced by imprisonment.

But until its formal abolition in 1834 by the Bentinck administration and its reintroduction in 1840s many arguments were raised in its favour because of its special availability for the Indian situation as in a poor country it 'released the offender to support his family' and also it was more 'conducive to welfare'. It was also stressed that corporal pain left a greater impression on the 'lowly' and 'depraved' who were otherwise 'too hardened' to suffer from imprisonment.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ From A. Fortescue, Magistrate of Patna Court to Dowdeswell, Secretary to Government, Fort William, Ld. 21 Dec 1811, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultation, dated 19 September 1812 No.18, IOLR, London.

⁹⁸ According to Radhika Singha, the issue of Corporal punishments (specially flogging) was at the centre of the controversy surrounding public punishment in early colonial penal mechanisms. The official correspondence about flogging passed through phases, just after the Cornwallis Regulations of 1793 different ways were sought to inflict it with sufficient severity, while avoiding fatal injury. An order of 26th April 1795 replaced the traditional instrument of flogging - the *Korah* - with the 'Cat'. By 1825 in the wake of utilitarian 'reforms' its relevance was started to be questioned on counts of utility, as an instrument like *rattan* decapitated the offender for 'hard labour'. It was also supposed to associate the colonial regime with torture and questioned the stance of the 'rule of law' and its claim of 'humanity'. By 1840s the Corporal punishments specially flogging was widely propagated but only for low caste offenders who were not to be 'kept away' from supporting their family and were too 'hardened' to be 'reformed' by imprisonment. For an elaborate discussion on these issues see, Radhika Singha, 'No Needless Pain on unintended Pleasures : Penal 'reforms' in the Colony 1825-1845', *IESHR*, 11, 1, n.s. (1995), pp43-50.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p47.

LOCAL POLICING INSTITUTIONS AS AGENCIES OF INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION COLLECTION.

Both *barkandazes* and *chaukidars* significantly contributed to the channelization of information about the local society for the British administrators, besides being agencies of policing and control. The local watchman or the *chaukidar* formed an important part of the indigenous information services and the intelligence conveying network. For instance in the Benares region the *gorait* was the local watch and ward agent for the community and also an informers to the police. C.A. Bayly mentions that he delivered incoming letters which were passed on from the head quarters post office through the police and it was not until the 1860s the authorities tried to replace *goraits* with regular postmen.¹⁰⁰ These local community watchmen derived information from unofficial sources, particularly the midwives and barbers who arranged marriage alliances, announced births, marriages and deaths to chief inhabitants and generally kept up with village gossip. In the country side the local watchmen existed more as a part of specialist service agencies that combined menial jobs and message-carrying around the village along with the official surveillance and policing duties. They answered to the local police officers like the *darogahs* or *thanadars*, as well as village elders or local zamindars and were also responsible for calling the villagers to the public offices and village accountant whenever required.

The *barkandazes* too carried out various intelligence gathering tasks for their employing authorities. It is mentioned the British administrators sent to local "thanas (of the *darogahs*) a few of the 'omedwars' (*Umeedwars* or aspirants) waiting on the Magistrates' office as *burkandazes* with orders to keep a good look out on the conduct of the *darogah* and to learn the actual amount of dacoities committed and which it had been a custom of the *darogahs* to conceal".¹⁰¹

With regards to the local *chaukidars*, the British efforts to curb such diversity of their local duties and to assimilate them into the general policing network went without a great

¹⁰⁰ C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information : Intelligence gathering and social communication in India 1780-1870*, (Cambridge, 1996), p164.

¹⁰¹ Basudev Chatterjee, 'The *Darogah* and the Country side', *IESHR*, Vol.XVIII, No.1, (1982), p29. cf. A.F.Tytler, *Considerations on the Present Political State of India... intended chiefly as a Manual of Instructions in their duties for the younger servants of the Company*, (2nd Ed., London, 1816), Vol. II, p305.

deal of success. The measures to enlist them into the British campaigns against female infanticides, widow burning and, illicit liquor distilling, away from the influences of local authorities were disappointing.¹⁰²

CONCLUSION

The early colonial state in its efforts to spread out its rule and sovereignty was underlining and developing a hierarchical network of 'coercive' institutions that helped in the consolidation of the nascent Empire. Through these hierarchical networks it came to unite and control various categories of the colonised population clenching the much needed legitimacy via these networks. The colonial Army stood at the apex of this hierarchical network ;much esteemed, it prided on its adherence to discipline, enlistment of 'superior' class of men and its strict regimentalization routines. Below it were the 'organised' and 'ranked' semi-militaristic but nevertheless 'irregular' militia companies or corps of 'sebundy' and 'nujeebs' who were heavily inspired by its stronger and superior but step sibling, always much in need of discipline and a 'separate' identity. At the very base were the network of such subaltern agencies of local policing and control. They were characteristically 'local' unorganised, undisciplined , composed of 'inferior', marginalised low caste drifters. Together all these provided for the consolidation of the early colonial rule in India.

¹⁰² C.A. Bayly, refers that an early 19th Century observer asserted that this 'officer' was called 'go-right' (sarcastic English usage of the 'native' term *gorait*) because he always 'goes-wrong' cf. *Benares Recorder*, dated 26th October 1847 in C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information* ,p164.

As an effective agency of control and policing geared to the needs of emerging colonial state, the *chaukidar* always disappointed the British administrators.

Conclusion

The thesis has analysed the early colonial perceptions and policies regarding multitudinous indigenous agencies of policing and control in the context of late 18th and early 19th Centuries. In this transitional period certain pre-colonial institutions and administrative practices were reoriented and harnessed by the British administrators to facilitate the process of state formation and its consolidation.

The first chapter elucidated how the Mughal *faujdari* was transformed by the measures of Warren Hastings in the 1770s and also how the nature of the pre-colonial institution of *darogha* was changed by the Cornwallis Regulations of 1793. These two institutions were in a way 'reinvented' by the early colonial administrators and were geared to their perception of policing and control. The second chapter highlighted upon similar processes of transformation in the context of *sihbandis* and *najibs* that were 'organised' into corps and 'tomans' (*tumans* or companies) for various surveillance and vigilance tasks of the nascent colonial administration. In the final chapter we looked at the local agencies of policing and 'coercion', eg. *chaukidars* and *barkandazes*. These rudimentary and relatively unorganised institution were utilised by the British administration as subaltern agencies of control and supervision. *Chaukidari* as an institutions of the local policing was formally brought under the authority of the Company Magistrates and *daroghas* by the Cornwallis Regulations of 1793. But this shift in the allegiance of the 'native' agency of *chaukidari* was beset with various functional anomalies, as discussed in the final chapter.

We have seen that in this early period of rule, police as an administrative branch was relatively underdeveloped. It either remained subordinated to the might of the military or existed as a corresponding activity to the revenue collection machinery. In the late 18th Century, W.W. Hunter while describing the functions of local *thanadari* establishment said that it might appear that; "I am describing revenue officers and not policemen ...nevertheless my description is a faithful one of the only police

then known. Under a vigorous landholder the *thanadar's* duties were chiefly fiscal, under an inert or corrupt one he became a mere plunderer".¹

The policing networks of this early period of the British rule comprised certain marginalised and displaced sections of the pre-colonial military systems. From the late 18th Century the British emphasis on underlining the distinction between the military and civilian society resulted in critical changes in the pre-colonial policing systems. For instance as we saw, how *sihbandis*, *najibs*, *barkandazes* and *faujgars*, that had pre-colonial roots, were transformed in nature under the early colonial rule. The British shorn them of their predominantly militaristic profile. This dispossession from a preponderant militaristic identity led them to form a part of the policing and control networks of the Company administration.

The first chapter highlighted upon the efforts of Warren Hastings in the 1770s to refurbish the Mughal institution of *faujdari*. His so called restorative measures led him to strip the agency of its militaristic nature. Ironically, even though the term *faujdar* was ceremoniously retained, it lost its original Persian essence as 'the keeper of an army' or *fauj*. He became more of an assisting agency to the local zamindari establishment, rather than functioning as an autonomous institution.

Sihbandis came to be popularized in the early 18th Century as an administrative practice, to raise temporary and irregular levies to enforce the crumbling revenue collections. However, these were transformed by the Britishers as 'an establishment' organised in a 'kind of' militaristic structure possessing a military like hierarchy of command. Thus the disorganised *sihbandis* came to be the 'Sebundy Corps' of the Company state deployed on multitudinous services and duties, Important among which was policing and control of revenue bearing territories and channels; trade routes and commercial network; Judicial department and penal mechanisms of the early colonial regime. We also have reference to their being engaged as armed labourers in the settlement of hitherto unsettled territory. For instance, in 1838 one Captain

¹ W.W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, (Calcutta, 1868),p169.

Gillmore of the Bengal Engineers was appointed to open the settlement of Darjeeling and to raise two companies of 'Sebundy Sappers' in order to provide the necessary labour as a 'local corp' They were armed and expected to fight if necessary.²

The *najibs* who formed an important part of the pre-Buxar, Awadh Nawab's army were unceremoniously marginalised after the debacle at Buxar. The modes of warfare they practiced got archaic and the *najibs* refused to change with the times. As a result, these overrun sections found themselves on the fringes of the Company's military structure. They fast devolved into the category of 'irregulars' and were organised into 'Nujeeb Corps' by the British and were significantly used for surveillance duties of the Thuggee and Dacoity Department in the 1830s and 1840s. They were utilised to curb activities of the Thugs, as 'mobile squads' for the vigilance on the highways, or on the tracks of the thugs along with the various approvers, even acting as watch guards to escort the arrested thugs to various prisons.

Under the early British rule *sihbandis* and *najibs* came to exist in an 'organised' framework in terms of structure and operation but as far as their identity was concerned it was still ambivalent in nature. They were cluelessly called 'semi-militaristic', 'civil corp' or even 'rough police'.³

Nevertheless, the path of their journey to becoming the early 20th Century civil Police Battalions was laid by the early 19th Century reorganisation of *sihbandis* and *najibs* as the organised irregular militia pool of the British regime. In the period of this study they emerged as the proto-types of the later day constabulary.

^{2.} Their pay was fixed at Rs. 6 per month instead of that of the Company sepoy's at Rs 7½ per month. But as soon as this company started work the rainy season commenced which was havocing. It is informed that 'all the coolies, who did not die, fled and some deserted', Gillmore himself got sick and Lord Napier as the officer of the army on borders of Bengal was sent to relieve him. He completed the 'Sebundy Sappers' with men from the border hills, 'garrows' and similar tribes. R.C. Temple, 'John Jones Sebundy Corp', *Calcutta Review*, (Oct.,1896),pp399-400.

^{3.} Ibid, p407, 'rough police' until the days of the Police Act of 1861 and 'then such of the irregular troops as existed by degrees into regular police.' Sir R.C. Temple says that the last official appearance to the term 'sebundy' is in the application to "the Sebundy Corps of Sappers and Miners" employed at Darjeeling. This is in East India Register down to July 1869 after which, Sir Temple says that, the title does not appear in any official list.

Gifact by 1845, we come across a reference to one proposal for incorporating such armi militaristic agencies into the 'ordinary police' establishment. Col. W.H. Sleeman, 1a> General Superintendent of the Thugee and Dacoity Department in a letter to e Secretary, recommended this very strongly. The plan forwarded was that the 'omans of Nujeebs' employed in Bengal should 'be distributed as supernumeraries among the seven police battalions.⁴

Besides these, there were also efforts to transform the local institution of *chaukidari* as a Government agency with its own recognised role in the administrative hierarchy. It was felt by the early British administrators that "assimilating it more nearly to our general system of policing"⁵ would considerably add to the efficiency of the policing network of the British India. The administrators sought ways and means to 'increase the efficiency', credibility and reliability of this indigenous institution. The Magisterial Inquiry of 1822 exposed some inherent flaws and irregularities in the system of local watch-and-ward. It was felt somewhat "anomalous that nowhere there exists any Regulations providing for their (*chaukidars*) support, specifying their duties, or protecting them from the oppressions to which they are notoriously more exposed than any class of people now existing under our government".⁶

By early 19th Century the British measures of intervention to formally takeover the local agency of *chaukidari* and its maintenance under their direct control became the centre of civil protest movement in some cities of North India. The resistance of 1810-11 in Benaras was triggered by the publication of Regulation XV of 1810 levying a tax on every house in several larger cities (in territories unde the British control) for the maintenance of local police, watch and ward, mainly the *chaukidars*.

⁴ From, Col. W.H. Sleeman, To F. Currie Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Fort William, FDPBR, (P.C.), dated 1st November 1845, No.12, NAI, New Delhi.

⁵ Extract of the Government of 27th June 1822, in K.K. Datta (ed), *Selections from Unpublished Correspondence between Judge-Magistrates and the Judge of Patna*, (Calcutta, 19-),p213

⁶ Ibid, p214.

Though the concept of taxation for policing was not a new one and had existed since the reign of Lord Cornwallis⁷, but the introduction of house tax as replacement over the existing *phatakbandi* tax,⁸ which was a local operation was met with sharp response from large sections of townsmen. There were *hartals*⁹, mass pickets and written petitions from every *muhallas* and occupational groups. Eventually the house tax was withdrawn and continued to be operated in its conventional local form through neighbourhood councils.¹⁰ If the house tax had gone into effect, the British municipal administration would have taken over the collection of a substantial source of revenue and also the responsibility for the pay of the *chaukidars*. According to Richard Heitler, 'It is only a small step from paying the *chaukidars* to controlling and selecting them. Thus the house tax *hartal* can be seen as in part a struggle between the British Government, anxious to extend its control over the city of Benares by centralizing under its own administration important taxation and police

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7. The concept of taxation for improved maintenance of the policing agencies and their effective upkeep was initiated by the Cornwallis administration in the form of Regulation XXII, section I,II,IV,V, of 1793. But the late 18th Century regulation underlined the need of selective taxation, defraying it only on the commercial community like the traders, merchants and shopkeepers as these 'at all times have a large property moving about the country and consequently (were) liable to suffer more than others', p224, Section-I. But the early 19th Century measure of taxation for the upkeep of *chaukidari* was more comprehensive and it came to include the whole of the indigenous society. The dwelling structure became criteria of local deduction which was a new concept.
 8. *Phatakbandi* system was an entirely a local operation organized within each *muhulla*. The name of the system was taken from the word *phatak* meaning the gate in the wall that used to surround each *muhulla*. In Duncan's time (1787-1795), these gate were regularly closed at night. But by 1810 many of these wall and gates had fallen into disrepair and most of the tax money went to pay the *chaukidars*. These *chaukidars* were largely responsible for the police functions within the neighbourhood and were chosen by the inhabitants of the *muhallas* themselves. The British Magistrate provided only or pro-forma approval of his appointment. The *Phatakbandi* system is one indication of the degree of autonomy enjoyed by each *muhalla* within the City-See Richard Heitler, 'Varanasi House Tax *Hartal* 1810-11', *IESHR*, 9, 3, (1972), p254.
 9. Ibid, *Hartal* according to Richard Heitler was sanskrit term derived from the terms 'hut' (a shop) and 'tala' (a lock) meaning "Shutting up all the shops in a market", p248.
 10. The incident became an important object lesson for benars and other dissident towns. Similar events occurred during 1815-1817 in other urban areas when the British attempted to introduce a more general regulation for *chaukidari* tax. Most town protested by means of large numbers of formal objections. There were more serious outbreaks in Mathura and Rohilkhand towns. The armed outbreak against British rule in Rohilkhand during April 1816 was caused by the method of collections of the new house tax which the British had introduced in large towns throughout the province in 1814. See. C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars : North Indian society in the age of British Expansion (1770-1870)*, (Cambridge, 1983), pp320-324.

powers, and the *muhalla's* corporation who were determined to resist this threat to their power and authority.¹¹

Besides being variously termed these local watch-and-ward agencies were prominently characterized by a diverse range of roles they performed besides being a policing and control agency. C.A. Bayly specially emphasizes the role of the local watchman in the information services and intelligence gathering network.¹² He mentions that he delivered incoming letters which passed on from the district headquarters post office through the police and it was not until the 1860s the authorities tried to replace *goraits* (an indigenous term for watchman) with regular postman. They doubled as local messengers and were responsible for calling the villagers to the public office and village accountants, whenever required. The *goraits* of the Benares region were a watch-and-ward agent for the local community and also an informer to the police. These community watchmen derived their information from unofficial sources, particularly barbers, midwives and scavengers.

Such close interlinkages of the *chaukidari* with other diverse channels of activity made it very difficult for the colonial administrators to just emphasize its watch-and-ward functions and assimilate it more closely to the general administrative structure. The British efforts to evolve it as a local policing agency of the state away from various local community chores and influences were not successful.

After the mutiny of 1857, the British efforts to organise and assimilate all the these indigenous policing and control agencies grew tremendously. In the post mutiny scenario the reliance placed on the regular soldiers of the Company army receded and the reliability placed on such localised and irregular agencies considerably enhanced. These became the 'enforcement agencies' of colonial state undertaking measures of social control and supervision for the consolidation of the colonial regime, stirred by tremors of the revolt.

¹¹. Richard Heitler, 'Varanasi House Tax *Hartal* 1810-11', *IESHR*, 9, 3, (1972), p254.

¹². C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p165.

APPENDIX 1

Proposed establishment of a 'Sebundy Corps' for the 'Mofussile' Duties in lieu of the Regular Troops, 'Burkudosses' and armed peons new employed therein, MDP, 6th July 1995, .No.2, NAI, New Delhi.

Proposed 'Sebundy Corps'

| LOCATION | JAMADAR | HAVILDAR | NAIKS | SIPAHIS |
|-----------------------|---------|----------|-------|---------|
| Dacca Collector | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Murshidabad Collector | - | 1 | 1 | 20 |
| Burdwan Collector | - | 1 | 1 | 25 |
| Birhbum Collector | - | 1 | 1 | 24 |
| Bhagalpur Collector | 1 | 2 | 2 | 30 |
| Chittagong Collector | 1 | 1 | 2 | 40 |
| Dinajpur Collector | 1 | 3 | 3 | 70 |
| Jessore Collector | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Midnapur Collector | - | 1 | 2 | 24 |
| Bihar Collector | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Nadia Collector | - | 1 | 1 | 20 |
| Meymensing Collector | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| 24 Pargana Collector | - | 1 | 1 | 12 |
| Purnea Collector | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Rajshahi Collector | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| Rungpur Collector | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| Shahbad Collector | 1 | 2 | 2 | 40 |
| Saran Collector | 1 | 3 | 3 | 80 |
| Tipperah Collector | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Tirhut Collector | - | 1 | 1 | 24 |

APPENDIX 1(b)

Proposed establishment of 'Sebundy Corps' for the commercial duties and for the duties of the Salt Department in lieu of the Regular Troops, 'Burkundosses' armed peons employed therein, MDP, 6TH JULY 1995, No. 5, MDI, New Delhi.

Proposed 'Sebundy Corps'

| LOCATION | JAMADAR | HAVILDAR | NAIKS | SIPAHIS |
|----------------------|---------|----------|-------|---------|
| Dacca Resident | 3 | 6 | 6 | 150 |
| Gazipur Resident | - | - | - | - |
| 'Hurripual' Resident | - | 1 | 1 | 16 |
| Khumarkah Resident | 1 | 2 | 2 | 40 |
| Patna Resident | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| Lakhipur Resident | 1 | 3 | 3 | 80 |
| Kasimbazar Resident | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| 'Keerpoy' Resident | - | 1 | 1 | 25 |
| Radnagore Resident | - | 1 | 1 | 20 |
| 'Gollagore' Resident | - | 1 | 1 | 16 |
| Rungpur Resident | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Shantipur Resident | 1 | 3 | 3 | 70 |
| Jungipur Resident | - | 1 | 1 | 20 |
| Malda Resident | 3 | 6 | 6 | 150 |
| Baulia Resident | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Chittagong Resident | 1 | 3 | 3 | 70 |
| Sonamukhi Resident | 3 | 6 | 6 | 150 |
| 'Harriant' Resident | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| 'Gonaleah' Resident | - | 1 | 1 | 20 |
| Salt Department | 6 | 12 | 12 | 300 |

APPENDIX 1(c)

To Nizamut Adawlt, statement of the proposed establishment of 'Sebundy Corps' for the judicial duties, in lieu of the regular 'Burkdosses' and armed peons employed therein, MDP, 6th July 1995, No.5, NAI, New Delhi.

Proposed 'Sebundy Corps'

| LOCATION | <i>JAMADAR</i> | <i>HAVILDAR</i> | <i>NAIKS</i> | <i>SIPAHIS</i> |
|---|----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Calcutta court of appeal and circuit | - | 1 | 2 | 12 |
| Patna court of appeal and circuit | - | 3 | 3 | 32 |
| Patna Magistrate | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| Dacca court of appeal and circuit | - | 3 | 3 | 32 |
| Dacca <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Dacca City Magistrate | 5 | 10 | 10 | 250 |
| Murshidabad court of appeal and circuit | - | 3 | 3 | 32 |
| Murshidabad City Judge | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Burdwan <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Birbhum <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Bhagalpur <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Chittagong <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Jessore <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| Midnapur <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Bihar <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| Dinajpur <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 2 | 5 | 5 | 130 |
| Nadia <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| Meymensing <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 4 | 8 | 8 | 200 |
| 24 Pargana Magistrate | 1 | 3 | 3 | 70 |
| Purnea <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 5 | 10 | 10 | 250 |
| Rajshahi Magistrate | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| Rungpur Magistrate | 3 | 6 | 6 | 150 |

| LOCATION | JAMADAR | HAVILDAR | NAIKS | SIPAHIS |
|---|---------|----------|-------|---------|
| Shahbad Magistrate | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| Saran Magistrate | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| Sylhet <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate and Collector | - | 2 | 2 | 30 |
| Tipperah <i>Zillah</i> Magistrate | 3 | 6 | 6 | 150 |
| Cooch-Bihar Commissioner | - | 1 | 1 | 20 |
| Backerganj Commissioner | 3 | 6 | 6 | 180 |

APPENDIX 2(a)

From, J.Sherer, Sub. Accountant General, Board of Trade. To Thomas Philpot Esq.,
Secretary to the Govt. Public Department, Fort William, Ld. 19th July 1803, MDP, dated
25th Aug. 1803, No. 2(b), (d), (e), NAI, New Delhi.

“Statement of present strength of ‘Sebundy Corps’ attached to Commercial and
Opium Department in province of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Benares”.

| RESIDENCES | JAMADAR | HAVILDAR | NAIKS | SIPAHIS | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Kasimbazar | - | 1 | 1 | 32 | 34 |
| Patna | 2 | 4 | 4 | 136 | 146 |
| Dacca | 3 | 12 | 12 | 150 | 177 |
| Lakhipur | 1 | 3 | 6 | 72 | 82 |
| Chittagong | 1 | 4 | 7 | 68 | 80 |
| Baliah | 1 | 1 | 1 | 50 | 53 |
| Khumarkali | 1 | 1 | 1 | 42 | 45 |
| Hurrial | 1 | 1 | 2 | 40 | 44 |
| Malda | 1 | 4 | 8 | 126 | 139 |
| Rungpur | 1 | 3 | 4 | 60 | 68 |
| Jangipur | - | 1 | 1 | 25 | 27 |
| Keerpoy | - | 2 | - | 25 | 27 |
| Midnapur | - | 1 | 2 | 30 | 33 |
| Radnagore | - | 1 | 1 | 24 | 26 |
| Santipur | 1 | 1 | 2 | 58 | 62 |
| Sonamukhi | 1 | 2 | 7 | 69 | 79 |
| Hurripaul | - | 1 | - | 16 | 17 |
| Golagore | - | 1 | - | 18 | 19 |
| Benares including Opium Dept. | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 55 |
| Jyntea | - | 1 | 1 | 18 | 20 |
| Mirzapur Distillery | - | - | 1 | 9 | 10 |
| Bihar Opium Agency | 1 | 3 | 3 | 50 | 57 |
| Customs House Hugli | - | 1 | 2 | 20 | 23 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 16 | 51 | 68 | 1,188 | 1,323 |

APPENDIX 2(b)

“Statement of present strength of ‘Sebundy Corps’ attached to Commercial and Opium Department in province of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Banâres, MDP, 25th Aug 1803, No. 2(d), NAI, New Delhi.

| DISTRICTS | JAMADAR | HAVILDAR | NAIKS | SIPAHIS | TOTAL |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Birbhum | - | 1 | 1 | 24 | 26 |
| Burdwan | - | 1 | 1 | 25 | 27 |
| Chittagong | 1 | 1 | 2 | 40 | 44 |
| Dacca | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 55 |
| Dinajpur | 1 | 3 | 3 | 70 | 77 |
| Jessore | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 55 |
| Mymensing | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 55 |
| Murshidabad | - | 1 | 1 | 20 | 22 |
| Nadia | - | 1 | 1 | 20 | 22 |
| Purnea | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 55 |
| Rajshahi | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 | 110 |
| Rungpur | 2 | 4 | 4 | 100 | 110 |
| Sylhet | - | 1 | - | 12 | 13 |
| Tipperah | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 55 |
| Bihar | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 55 |
| Bhagalpur | 1 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 55 |
| Saran | 1 | 3 | 3 | 80 | 87 |
| Shahbad | 1 | 2 | 2 | 40 | 45 |
| Tirhet | - | 1 | 1 | 24 | 26 |
| Midnapur | - | 1 | 2 | 24 | 27 |
| Benares | 1 | 3 | 3 | 63 | 90 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 16 | 41 | 42 | 1,012 | 1,111 |

APPENDIX 3

Outlined proposals of reform of 1804 regarding the Provincial Corps to be stationed at Benares, Patna, Purnea, Murshidabad, Burdwan, Dacca and Chittagong.

Benares Provincial Corps

| | | |
|---|-------------|--|
| → | at Benares | — Provincial Court — City Court — Revenue Department — Commercial Resident and Opium Department |
| → | at Jaunpur | — <i>Zillah</i> Court |
| → | at Mirzapur | — <i>Zillah</i> Court |

Patna Provincial Corps

| | | |
|---|-------------|---|
| → | at Patna | — Commercial Department — Provincial Court — City Court |
| → | at Bihar | — Commercial Opium Agency — <i>Zillah</i> Court |
| → | at Saran | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah</i> Court |
| → | at Shahabad | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah</i> Court |
| → | at Tirhut | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah</i> Court |

Purnea Provincial Corps

| | | |
|---|-------------|--|
| → | at Purnea | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah</i> Court |
| → | at Dinajpur | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah</i> Court |
| → | at Rungpur | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah</i> Court — Commercial Department |
| → | at Malda | — Commercial Department |

DH-6439

Murshidabad Provincial Corps

| | | |
|---|----------------|---|
| → | at Murshidabad | — Revenue Department — Commercial Department |
| → | at Rajshahi | — Revenue Department — Commercial Department |
| → | at Kasimbazar | — Revenue Department — Commercial Department |

Chittagong Provincial Corps

| | | |
|---|-------------|-------------------------|
| → | at Tipperah | — <i>Zillah Court</i> |
| → | at Lakhipur | — Commercial Department |
| → | at Baliah | — Salt Department |

Burdwan Provincial Corps

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| → | at Burdwan | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah Court</i> |
| → | at Birbhum | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah Court</i> |
| → | at Midnapur | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah Court</i> — Commercial Department |
| → | Besides also at Commercial Departments at Radnagore, Santipur, Sonamukhy, Hurripaul, Golagore, Jyntea | |

Dacca Provincial Corps

| | | |
|---|---------------|---|
| → | at Dacca | — Revenue Department — Provincial Court — City Court — <i>Zillah Court</i> |
| → | at Mymensing | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah Court</i> |
| → | at sylhet | — Revenue Department — <i>Zillah Court</i> |
| → | at Backergunj | — Commercial Department |

The duties of 'Sebundies' at Bulwa have been performed by the Calcutta Nature Militia in consequence of the Gegeral orders of 22nd Nov. 1800. The party of Calcutta Nature Militia at Bulwa must join its corps at the Presidency as soon as the men of the chittagong Corp can be sent to releve there off.

APPENDIX 4(a)

To , Col. G.H. Fagan, Adjutant General, (H.Q) from, H.Y. Hearsey, Captain
Commanding 'Nujeeb Corps', Bareilly, l.d. 31 Dec. 1814, Foreign Dept., Secret Branch, 11
April 1815, No., NAI, New Delhi, "Present state of a 'Corps of Nujeebs' raised at Bareilly
under the command of captain Hearsey agreeable to the muster taken on 31st Dec. 1814.

| No. of 'toomuns | Status | Toomundars | Jamadars | Kote Havildars | Nesbandies | Havildars | Duffadars | Drummers | Bhistees | Nirjeebs | Total in each toomun |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1st | Present in parade | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 93 | 115 |
| 2nd | Present in parade | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 95 | 16 |
| 3rd | Present in parade | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 92 | 113 |
| 4th | Present in parade | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 99 | 121 |
| 5th | Present in parade | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 94 | 116 |
| 6th | Present in parade | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 91 | 113 |
| 7th | Present in parade | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 90 | 112 |
| 8th | Present in parade | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 94 | 116 |
| 9th | Present in parade | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 96 | 118 |
| absent | 1st 'Toomun' for Matchlock | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | 6 |
| absent | 2nd 'Toomun' for M 5 days | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 4 | 5 |
| absent | 3rd 'Toomun' for M 5 days | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 7 | 8 |
| absent | 5th 'Toomun' for M 5 days | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | 5 |
| absent | 7th 'Toomun' for M 5 days | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 9 | 9 |
| absent | 9th 'Toomun' for M 5 days | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 3 |
| | Grand Total | 9 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 54 | 72 | 18 | 9 | 883 | 1081 |

APPENDIX 4(b)

Present state of the nujeeb battalion now raising at Agra by Col. Pohlman Sicundra
near Agra, 1 Jan 1815

| | |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| 4 | 'Tommandars' (<i>Tumandars</i>) |
| 4 | Naibdars (<i>Naib Tumandars</i>) |
| 4 | 'Jummadars' (<i>Jamadars</i>) |
| 8 | 'Duffadars' (<i>Dafahdar</i>) |
| 5 | <i>Bhisties</i> |
| 450 | 'Nujeebs' (<i>Najibs</i>) |
| 2 | 'Tashy' players |
| 2 | 'Murfa' players |
| 1 | 'Cymbal' players |
| 1 | Persian writer |
| 481 | Total |

Signed
A. Pohlman
Officer Commanding 'Nujeeb Corps'

A time copy
signed by G.H. Fagan
Adjutant General

APPENDIX 4(c)

Statement of period entertained

| Period - when, where & span | 'Nujees' | <i>Bhisties</i> |
|--|-----------------|------------------------|
| Entertained to 15 Dec 1814 | 700 | 4 |
| Entertained to 16 Dec 1814 at Agra | 216 | 2 |
| Entertained to 17 Dec 1814 | 9 | - |
| Entertained to 19 Dec 1814 | 23 | 1 |
| Entertained to 21 Dec 1814 | 30 | 1 |
| Entertained to 24 Dec 1814 | 30 | - |
| Entertained to 27 Dec 1814 | 64 | 1 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 1072 | 9 |

31 Dec 1814
Bareilly

A.Y. Hearsey
Captain Commanding 'Nujeeb Corps'

APPENDIX 4(d)

Statement of arms, equipment and necessaries of a 'nujeebs' raised at Bareilly for the service of the mountains under the command of Captain Hearsey as taken on 31st Dec 1814.

| | |
|--|------|
| Musquets and Carthies fit for service with Pouches belonging to me | 55 |
| New <i>Dhamakas</i> with 132 Bayonets purchased at Agra arrived here on 27th Dec. | 143 |
| Old <i>Dhamakas</i> from Agra Magazines under repairs will be completed in 7days | 100 |
| new <i>Dhamakas</i> purchased at Agra and on their way here will arrive on 1st Jan 1815 | 141 |
| Matchlocks with powder horn bags and being the property of the 'nujeebs' many in different ones but under orders to exchange them or purchase new ones for which purpose the men require advances. | 425 |
| Colours, staff spears and accouterments complete | 9 |
| 'Havildar' spears complete mounted in Bamboos | 54 |
| New powder Horns with Bayonets and Scabbars etc. newly completed | 150 |
| New powder Horns coming from Budaon nearly completed | 60 |
| Cotton quilted light blue clothing completed and distributed | 611 |
| Pairs of new shoes in reserve for Hilly service | 200 |
| Watchcloaks - wanting to complete on account of the forcible detention of cloth by Mr. Satter Coll. G.L. since the 19th instant although on that day, I sent a man to pay duties thereon, which he refused taking and the cloth is now lying at the custom house | 200 |
| <i>Kooppahs</i> for carrying gunpowder complete painted and made so as to be swung on the back like a knapsack (or kundlee) | 4 |
| 1/4 pants wanted with conveyance or allowance for the same to cover the arms and accoutrements during rains. | 9 |
| Flints wanted, I have about 150 present | 165 |
| Rounds of musquets ammunition made up into cartridge wanted | 1100 |

continued 4(d)

ABSTRACTS OF ARMS AND ACCOUNTREMENTS

| Condition | Havildar spear | Musquets carbines | 'Cartoish' boxes | new Dhamakas | old Dhamakas | Powder horns | Matchlocks | Matchlock accts | Columns staff | Total arms for men |
|---|----------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Present fit for service | 54 | 55 | 55 | 143 | - | 150 | 425 | 425 | 9 | 686 |
| Present under repair from Agra | - | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | - | - | 100 |
| on their way from Agra present for duty | - | - | - | 141 | - | - | - | - | - | 141 |
| On their way from Badaon | - | - | - | - | - | 60 | - | - | - | 60 |
| Total arms prepared | 54 | 55 | - | 284 | 100 | - | 425 | - | 9 | 927 |
| Wanting to complete | - | - | - | - | - | - | 91 | - | - | 91 |
| Grand Total | | | | | | | | | | 1018 |

A.Y. Hearsey
Captain Commanding 'Nujeeb Corps'

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