

**The Police in Colonial Punjab
1861-1947**

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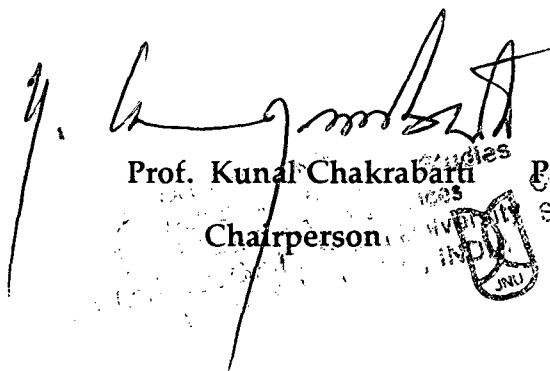
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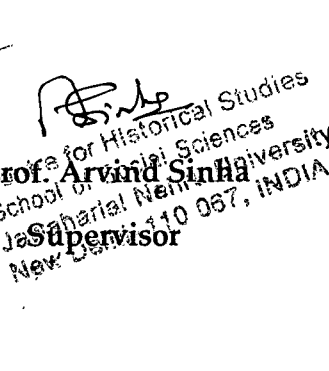
I declare that the dissertation entitled "The Police in Colonial Punjab, 1861-1947" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.



Gagan Preet Singh

Certificate

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


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Contents

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Acknowledgments

Introduction	1-12
Chapter I <i>Origins, 1861-1900</i>	13-39
Chapter II <i>Consolidation, 1901-1947</i>	40-89
Chapter III <i>Police, Partition, and Communalism</i>	90-115
Chapter IV <i>Police and Rural Protest</i>	116-138
Conclusion	139-143
Appendices	144-145
<i>Bibliography</i>	146-154

List of Tables

- 1.1 Composition of the police force in the Punjab, 1861-1862**
- 1.2 Composition of North Western Provinces' police force in 1863**
- 1.3 Dynamic Composition of police force in the Punjab from 1877-1896**
- 2.1 Religion and Caste Composition of police of the Punjab in 1871**
- 2.2 Caste Background of men recruited during the year 1901**
- 2.3 Recruitment in Muzaffargarh District, 1927-28**
- 2.4 Sikhs in the Higher Ranks of the Police of the Punjab in 1921**
- 2.5 Proportion of different religious communities in constabulary by 1941**
- 2.6 Proportion of different religious communities in constabulary on 1 April 1942**
- 2.7 Resignations in pre-Great War years from 1911-1914**
- 2.8 Composition of Police-Officers and Men from 1921-1944**
- 3.1 Proportion of 'Hindu Zamindars' in the Upper Subordinate police in 1928**
- 3.2 Number of Muslim Superintendents of Police from 1937-41**

List of Appendices

Appendix I

Statement showing strength and cost of police in the Punjab, 1900-1944

Appendix II

Return showing the equipment, discipline and general internal management of the police from 1921-1944

Acknowledgments

I grew up looking up to my father and who in turn had grown up looking up to his father. Both my father and his father served in the police. In 1988, when I was three years old, my grandfather passed away. My knowledge about my grandfather therefore is based entirely on the stories I have heard from my father. These tales included both his adventures as well as misadventures. Born in Sialkot district of the Punjab, now in Pakistan, my grandfather, as an intelligence officer of the British Indian government, had journeyed into as many as 'fourteen' countries of the Middle East during the World War II. This Sherlock Holmes of our family suffered occasional reverses too, including an instance where a prisoner slipped out of his hands within a court complex. The life of an ordinary police man is more often than not a mixture of the sweet as well as the salty and I am sure the career of my father was no different.

The purpose of the present work, therefore, is not to burden bookshelves with another scathing criticism of police brutalities in the past. At any rate, the authoritarian and oppressive character of colonial police needs no introduction. Rather an effort is made here to understand the circumstances which produced the most unpopular police forces. Post colonial India has seen immense improvements in the remunerative value and living conditions of police although the organising principles hardly underwent any change. The training imparted to the constabulary still remains a most dehumanising endeavour. Even now, literacy is not much sought after as far as the constabulary is concerned. However, all these aspects merit detailed consideration and further studies. Presently, I will proceed to acknowledging those who made this work possible.

First and foremost, thanks are due to my Supervisor, Prof. Arvind Sinha for helping me at all moments in completion of this work. Prof. Sinha not only supervised my work but also provided moral support whenever I needed it the most. As his student, I had learnt a lot many things and I thank Prof. Sinha for all his magnanimity and courteously warm receptions of my ideas and work.

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Among friends, at home Munish Singh, Dr. Baljeet Singh, Dr. Jasbir Singh, Mr. Dinesh Kumar, Karanbir Singh, Sachin Godara, Dr. Harjit Singh, Harshdeep Singh have helped me in very many ways. In JNU, Priyanka and Asish were always there to cheer me up. Among others Parveen, Kalai, Leslie, Anandi, Abilash, Rakhi, Pushpa, Samira were a great support. Anirban andopadhayay deserves a special mention for all his help and interest in my life and work. Rajbir provided moral support and helped me in all possible manners. Anna Thomas fulfilled all promises and shared all colours of life most calmly.

Among family members in New Delhi, Arvind Ji, *Didi* and their daughter Suhana always provided a niche for psychological regeneration. At home, Ruby, my other sister, is always up in arms against me and I love her for that 'martial' spirit. My brother and his children Mani and Pari missed me all this while and I hope I will do justice to them once I am back. *Ma* and *Papa* have always been an embodiment of the highest standards of conduct and unfailingly nurtured my personality with a firm emphasis on cultivating the right moral values. My father has always remained a role model for me. To him I dedicate this humble work.

Introduction

The colonial state had three pillars to maintain its rule in British India: the Indian Civil Services (ICS), the 'steel frame', the army 'the bulwark' and the constabulary 'the bottom line'. The colonial Punjab had held a pivotal place in the history of all the three branches. The Civilians or the ICS officers serving in the Punjab were considered as a *corps d'elite*.¹ The majority of the British Indian army was recruited from the Punjab.² The men from the Punjab were favourite recruits of the police forces of the British Empire.³ However, while the role of the bureaucracy and army in the Punjab has received adequate attention, the role of police has been neglected. There is no single monograph on the history of the police of the Punjab available. The present work opens up the possibility for a monograph on the history of the police in the colonial Punjab.⁴ The present work covers a time-span of almost a century. During this period, considerable changes took place in the history of the police in Punjab. To put it crudely, in the beginning of our period, the policemen bestridden horses, in the middle stepped down to ride the bicycles and finally seated themselves on back seats of motor cars.

The history of the police forces in colonial India had remained a neglected subject. The available works on colonial police are very few in number. In the existing literature, colonial police had attracted scholars' attention in different ways. On an average three major approaches may be identified in the historiography of the colonial police. Among them, the first approach is the 'institutional' or 'departmental' approach. This approach developed

¹ Clive Dewey, *The Mind of the Indian Civil Service*, New Delhi, 1996, p.201

² For instance see David, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, Macmillan Press, London, 1994 and Rajit K. Mazumdar, *The Indian Army and the Making of the Punjab*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2003, pp.15-18

³ Madhavi Thampi, "Indian Soldiers, Policemen and Watchmen in China in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", *China Report*, Vol. 35(4), 1999, pp.403-437, Thomas Metcalf, "Sikh Recruitment for Colonial Military and Police Forces, 1874-1914", in *Forging the Raj: Essays on British India in the Heyday of Empire*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005

⁴ The expression "Punjab Police" is avoided throughout the present work to distinguish it from the contemporary Punjab Police.

foremost in the writings of the colonial officials themselves followed by their counterparts and historians in Independent India.⁵ The focus of this approach is to understand the history of provincial police forces.⁶ The second approach emphasises, though not completely demarcated from the first approach, on colonial urban environments and policing practices.⁷ The third approach had recently developed as a part of 'global studies'.⁸ This approach emphasises on the circulation of men and ideas related to police in the British Empire.⁹ The present approach in this monograph is restricted more to the 'institutional' or 'departmental' approach. In this way an effort is made to understand the history of the colonial police force in the province of the Punjab.

The historiography of the colonial police is based on widely shared assumptions which are replicated in almost all major works. Therefore, instead of discussing the particularities of each work, an attempt is made bring out the similarities and broadly shared

⁵ Edmund Cox, *Police and Crime in India*, 1910, Reprint 1976, New Delhi, J.C.Curry, *The Indian Police*, 1932, reprint, Manu Publications, New Delhi, 1977, Sir Percival Griffiths, *To Guard my People: The history of the Indian Police*, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1971, Anandswarup Gupta, *The Police in British India: 1861-1947*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1979, David Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule: Madras, 1859-1947*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1986, K.S. Dhillon, *Defenders of the Establishment: Ruler-supportive Police Forces of South Asia*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 1998. Also forthcoming, David A. Campion, *Watchman of the Raj: The Dilemmas of Colonial Policing in British India, 1870-1931*,

⁶ The major example is David Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule: Madras, 1859-1947*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1986,

⁷ Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: class, resistance and the state in India, c.1850-1950*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Chapter VI, "Police and public order in Bombay, 1880-1947" Nandini Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth century India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, Chapter IV, "Urban Policing and the Poor", pp.111-139, Gyanesh Kudaisya, "In Aid of Civil Power": The colonial Army in Northern India, c.1919-42", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol.32, no.1, January 2004, pp.41-68 Parshant Kidambi, "'The Ultimate Masters of the City': Police, Public order and poor in Colonial Bombay, c.1893-1914", *Crime, History and Societies*, Vol.8, no.1, 2004, pp.27-47, M.R. Anderson, "Public Nuisance and Private Purpose: Policed Environments in British India, 1860-1947", an unpublished paper.

⁸ James B. Wolf, "Asian and African Recruitment in the Kenya Police, 1920-1950", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 6(3), 1973, pp. 401-412, Madhavi Thampi, "Indian Soldiers, Policemen and Watchmen in China in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", *China Report*, Vol. 35(4), 1999, pp.403-437, Thomas Metcalf, "Sikh Recruitment for Colonial Military and Police Forces, 1874-1914", in *Forging the Raj: Essays on British India in the Heyday of Empire*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005, Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, University of California Press, 2007, for an earlier work, Kernail Singh Sandhu, *Indians in Malaya*, Cambridge, 1968, also Markovits, C. & et.al. *Society and Circulation, mobile people and itinerant cultures in South Asia, 1750-1950*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2003

⁹ For instance, it is argued that in many British colonies, not only Indians were recruited in the police forces but also the Criminal and Civil Law codes were adopted from India, for instance, see James B. Wolf, "Asian and African Recruitment in the Kenya Police, 1920-1950", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 6(3), 1973, pp. 401-412

arguments and assumptions in the history writing of the police. The present work tries to look at prevalent broad formulations and questions their relevance. The present monograph has identified few important assumptions in the historiography of the colonial police. These oft, repeated set of arguments require historical scrutiny. There are at least three major issues identified in this monograph. First, to what extent, the colonial police in India was based on Royal Irish Constabulary model and was semi-military and armed in character. The second aspect discusses the role of the police in the internal defence of India. It seeks to explore whether the police had a marginal role in the internal defence of British India as the army had the distinction of being the main institution of control throughout the colonial period. The police was whether adequate or competent to deal with major law and order problems. Third, it is assumed that the history writing of the police should not look at other administrative branches of the colonial state apparatus. It is my submission that the history of police can not be studied in isolation without looking at history of army. All these assumptions have been reviewed in the present work on the basis of evidence available.

A look at the existing historiography will reveal that there has been a broad consensus in describing the origins and character of the colonial police forces in the sub-continent. The Charles Napier's Sind police model, which he introduced in Sind in 1843 and in turn was based on Royal Irish Constabulary model, is considered as the archetype of the subsequent police forces in India. The Royal Irish Constabulary established in 1836 is considered as a model for colonial police forces. The contemporary colonial administrators appreciated Royal Irish Constabulary model for its efficiency in maintenance of order. In the post-Independence era, scholars identified the colonial police with Royal Irish Constabulary model and criticised it for its oppressive and armed character. Both colonial and post-colonial historiography never entered into an inquiry of determining the character of Charles Napier's Sind model nor Royal Irish Constabulary. Further, while the importance of Charles Napier's Sind model is

underlined, the role of other political factors is often ignored. For instance Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 was a powerful factor in colonial North India but in existing historiography emphasis is more on successive reforms led by colonial officials.¹⁰

The major administrative historian of the Indian police, Edmund C. Cox, in his work *Police and Crime in India* (1910) regarded Sir Charles Napier as 'the father of the Indian police'. He argued: "No sooner had Napier conquered Sind than he set himself to the task of introducing an efficient police-force on the principles adopted in England."¹¹ According to him in 1853 the police of the Bombay Presidency was remodelled on Napier's lines. In 1855 the system was extended to Madras. Similarly on the annexation of the Punjab in 1849 a police-force was organised on the lines of Sind Police. A next step in this direction was the appointment of a Commission in 1860 to inquire into the police administration of British India.¹² J.C. Curry, another colonial administrator-cum-historian of the police, also acknowledged in his work, *The Indian Police*, (1931) Napier's contribution in building police forces in the sub-continent. According to him it was 'the genius of the rough, but very ready, old conqueror of Sind', Sir Charles Napier which led him to the establishment of Sind Police on the model of the Royal Irish Constabulary.¹³ The Indian Police Commission of 1861 introduced an organised system of police on the lines of Royal Irish Constabulary model. A similar sort of repetition is made by Sir Percival Griffiths in his work *To Guard my People: The history of the Indian Police* (1971).¹⁴

In the post Independence period, the colonial police was identified with Royal Irish Constabulary model and was criticised for its armed character. For instance, Anandswarup

¹⁰ David Arnold undermines the role of mutiny in coming up of police forces in the sub-continent. He argues "...especially in Madras, these developments hastened rather than initiated consideration of improved methods of policing....the establishment of the new police in the 1850's was an outcome of more than fifty years of British experimentation and experience of dominion." Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule*, OUP, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 8-9

¹¹ Edmund Cox., *Police and Crime in India*, 1910, Reprint 1976, New Delhi, p.67

¹² *ibid.*, pp.70-71

¹³ J.C. Curry, *The Indian Police*, 1931, reprint 1971, New Delhi, pp.31-34

¹⁴ Sir Percival Griffiths, *To Guard my People: The history of the Indian Police*, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1971, p.67

Gupta in his *The Police in British India: 1861-1947* (1979) argued for the armed character of the colonial police in India, he maintains: “the police located in police stations all over the country were reorganised as a kind of a civilian ‘army of occupation’ and became responsible for quelling all local tumults and disturbances with the army standing behind them to step in if the task exceeded their capacity. The district police were gradually supplemented by special armed reserves at selected centres. The roles of the army, and the police were clearly defined and led to a gradual increase in the strength of the armed police till it reached fantastic proportions in 1943”.¹⁵

The approach of J.C. Madan, in his richly documented work, *Indian Police* (1980) was not very different. He again replicated the same argument by emphasising Charles Napier’s Sind Model and its extension to other areas subsequently.¹⁶ His work differs from others for he discussed police reforms of 1860-61 in a great detail.¹⁷ Among the non-Indian, post-Independence historians, David Arnold’s work on Madras police during colonial period is most promising. However, Arnold in his *Police Power and Colonial Rule* (1986) repeated the above argument uncritically.

David Arnold regarded that colonial police force in India was based on Royal Irish Constabulary Model. As he argued: “Much institutional borrowing came from the Irish Constabulary model to meet colonial requirements. The police of colonial Ireland unlike London Metropolitan Police were a centralized, paramilitary force. The senior officers were often men with military experience: the ranks, subjected to virtually military discipline and training, were equipped with carbines and housed in barracks.”¹⁸ The first attempt to introduce into India a police force on Irish lines was made by General Charles Napier in Sind

¹⁵ Anandswarup Gupta, *The Police in British India: 1861-1947*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1979, p.xi

¹⁶ J.C. Madan, *Indian Police: Its development up to 1905 An historical Analysis*, Uppal Publishing House, New Delhi, pp. 35-39

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 40-79

¹⁸ Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule*, p.26

following its annexation in 1843. In Sind the military element remained strong: the constabulary consisted of a rural infantry equipped with carbines and a mounted armed police. The Sind police was imitated in other provinces, especially in the Punjab, following its annexation in 1849.¹⁹ According to Arnold this model was incorporated in the Indian Police Act of 1861 on which the police forces of the raj were based.

Gyanesh Kudaisya in his major work *Region, Nation, "Heartland"* (2006) on North Western Provinces (present day Uttar Pradesh) provides us with a similar type of understanding.²⁰ Kudaisya mainly relied on secondary sources and particularly unpublished PhD thesis of D.B. Trivedi submitted in Cambridge University in 1978²¹. Both Kudaisya and Trivedi argued for the military character of the colonial police force. For instance Trivedi argues: "The police could not overcome the legacy of the circumstances of its creation for a long time and its military orientation distracted it from its more legitimate functions of detection and suppression of crime".²² I have tried to examine this view on the basis of new sources located in the archives.

In this way the existing historiography on colonial police forces in India suggest us that the colonial police was an 'armed constabulary' and it was primarily based on Royal Irish Constabulary Model which was introduced for the first time in India by Sir Charles Napier in Sind in 1843.²³ The first and perhaps the only challenge to the above understanding

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.27

²⁰ Gyanesh Kudaisya, *Region, Nation, "Heartland": Uttar Pradesh in India's Body Politic*, Sage, New Delhi, 2006

²¹ D. B. Trivedi, "Law and Order in Oudh 1859-76", unpublished doctoral thesis, SOAS, University of London, 1978

²² D. B. Trivedi, "Law and Order in Oudh 1859-76", p. 180, quoted in Kudaisya, *Region, Nation, "Heartland"*, p. 41

²³ Armed character of colonial police force is also emphasised for a later period by Nandini Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth century India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, Chapter IV, "Urban Policing and the Poor", pp.111-139, Gyanesh Kudaisya, "'In Aid of Civil Power': The colonial Army in Northern India, c.1919-42", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol.32, no.1, January 2004, pp.41-68 and Parshant Kidambi, "'The Ultimate Masters of the City': Police, Public order and poor in Colonial Bombay, c.1893-1914", *Crime, History and Societies*, Vol.8, no.1, 2004, pp.27-47. Argument is very different with Rajnarayan Chandavarkar but his work is restricted to Bombay city see his,

was posed by Richard Hawkins in an important article in a collection of essays on British colonial police forces.²⁴ Richard Hawkins disagreed with the assumption that the colonial police forces were based on Royal Irish Constabulary. He considered it a 'nebulous' argument, as Hawkins wrote, "the success of the Irish system validated further attempts on similar lines elsewhere, it served as a precedent to be cited, an example to be considered, and a standard to be striven for; the extent to which it was actually copied in any given instance, however, remains to be established, and has too often been taken for granted."²⁵ In another important observation Hawkins rightly asserted that the circumstances and character of a police force in the British Empire varied from one place to the other and there was no standardised replica of a model found anywhere: "...anyone who surveys the police forces of the empire, at whatever period, expecting to find so many replicas of the Irish constabulary, will be disappointed and indeed bewildered".²⁶ Therefore apart from few exceptions²⁷, there is hardly any work challenging the above pervasive argument. The present the present tries to look at this view in a different light.

The second major theme of the present monograph is to review the role of police in the maintenance of the internal security of the colonial state. The army historians p have

Chapter VI, "Police and public order in Bombay, 1880-1947" in his *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: class, resistance and the state in India, c.1850-1950*, Cambridge University Press, 1998

²⁴ Richard Hawkins, "The 'Irish Model' and the Empire: A case of reassessment", in David M. Anderson and David Killingray (eds), *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830-1940*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1991

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.24

²⁶ *ibid.*, p.19

²⁷ Rajnaryan Chandavarkar (1998) and recently Prashant Kidambi (2007) have reviewed the character of the colonial police in India. However, these works are excluded here for they the scope of these works is only restricted to urban areas. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: class, resistance and the state in India, c.1850-1950*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Chapter VI, "Police and public order in Bombay, 1880-1947", pp.180-81, Prashant Kidami., *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2007. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar's study of Bombay police caught the contradictions of the historiography of police. He argues: "... the police have been portrayed as the main force of a colonial state which was both hegemonic and vulnerable; characterized as coercive yet found to be ineffectual; motivated by racism yet restrained by an inherent metropolitan liberalism; allied closely with Indian propertied elites and yet the bludgeon of the ruling race', pp.180-81

argued for the pivotal role of colonial army in maintaining the internal defence. Paradoxically, the images which have outlived the raj and were transferred from colonial to post-colonial scenario are not those of army but police. The role of the police, its brutality, oppressive character, violent behaviour, corrupt nature everything is remembered and has remained a standard image of the police. On the other hand, army is conspicuously absent from the public mind or the collective memory, never remembered, never condemned.

According to David Omissi, a prominent army historian, the colonial army was mostly meant for internal security purposes. Omissi argued that the colonial army was a disciplined, reliable and loyal institution. In contrast, colonial police was socially vulnerable, unreliable, and rebellious: "an imperfect instrument of imperial authority, they lived and worked in daily contact with the local population, which exposed them and their families to social pressures and intimidation. The police were often unreliable and a police mutiny was a constant colonial fear."²⁸ Hence, the army was the last recourse to order. From the beginning to end of colonial rule the army dominated internal security scene.²⁹ In the first decade of the twentieth century, following Kitchner's reforms, the British Indian Army was divided into the field army (for war beyond the frontiers); covering troops (for operations on the frontier); and internal security forces. By 1925, the British Indian Army consisted of 57,000 British troops, and an Indian army of 140,000 Sepoys. By 1920's, the internal security forces comprised of 22 of the 100 established Indian infantry battalions, along with 28 battalions of British infantry, and some cavalry, artillery and armoured car units. The internal security forces were stationed so as to guard essential communications, to protect scattered European communities, and to overawe turbulent cities and towns.³⁰ As, Gyanesh Kudaisya says: "...whether and to what degree the Raj could uphold its authority depended on how well the

²⁸ David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, Macmillan, London, 1994, pp.232-33

²⁹ David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, Macmillan, London, 1994, pp.232-33

³⁰ D. A. Low, "Introduction: the climatic years 1917-47", in *Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917-47*, Arnold Heinmann, London, 1977, p.3

army performed..."³¹ The presence of troops created a moral effect. In fact, it was not so much performance as presence which had effect"³²

The existing literature has not overtly stated the intricacies involved and thereby obfuscated the reality. It is believed that there were two ways in which army contributed to the internal security of the raj

1. The 'Civil-Martial' Law
2. In the Aid of civil power

The 'civil-martial' law was a rare device employed by the colonial state, particularly after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. At the national level, after the Non-cooperation Movement, British always had an agreed Martial Law Ordinance in draft, but it was seldom applied particularly in the Punjab.³³ In the Punjab, 'civil-martial' law was never invoked after 1919's disturbances.³⁴

The existing historiography concurs with this proposition that a major shift took place after the Jallianwala bagh incident. As D. A. Low says, " in the wake of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919, the British were very reluctant to use the army to suppress nationalist agitations, and particularly reluctant to impose martial law on widespread scale. Their prime

³¹ Gyanesh Kudaisya, *Region, Nation, "Heartland": Uttar Pradesh in India's Body Politics*, Sage, New Delhi, 2006, pp.89-92

³² *ibid*, pp.103-110

³³ However, it was applied in other cases, such as Sholapur, 1931. See D.A. Low(ed), *Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917-47*, Arnold-Heinemann, London, 1977, p.4

³⁴ In 1970's, Syed Nur Ahmad, a Pakistani journalist, based on his memories, wrote a book in Urdu, *Martial Law se Martial Law tak*. In pre-partition times, Syed was the Chief Political Correspondent of *The Civil and Military Gazette*. As a journalist he witnessed the Jallianwala Bagh incident in April 1919 and the civil-martial rule imposed at that time in Amritsar. After partition, he left for Pakistan, and served in the Government of East Punjab. In October 1958, the military dictator, Ayub Khan usurped power by throwing away the civil government and subsequently, a civil-martial rule was declared in Pakistan. These two key incidents, Syed chose, as the beginning and end of his narrative. Had there been another incident of 'martial-law' in between 1919-1958, Syed, who was well acquainted with the politics of the Punjab might not have chosen this title for his book. In other words there was no martial law in Punjab after the Jallianwala Bagh incidence. This book was translated in English by Mahmud Ali and subsequently an edited version by Craig Baxter was published in 1985, as *From Martial Law to Martial Law: Politics in the Punjab, 1919-1958*, Vanguard, Lahore, 1985

arm came to be police..”³⁵ Army was rarely employed after this event particularly in the Punjab. Gyanesh Kudaisya importantly recognised the Jalliwala Bagh incident as a landmark in the history of the colonial state. According to Kudaisya, it was a major watershed in the strategic thinking for internal security purposes: “the effects of the Jalliwala Bagh massacre in 1919 had been disastrous, and the Raj had been more than willing to absorb the lessons well”³⁶ As a contemporary remarked: “The Government was determined to prevent a repetition of the Bagh, and so a strict drill was laid out for troops called out in aid of the civil power, to ensure that they would use only minimum force and not to be carried away by the heat of the moment”³⁷ The deployment of the troops was also uneconomical and the resistance came from within the army itself.³⁸

However, it is not explained how police, with a very thin presence, could deal with all law and order problems in the absence of army. This is one question which remains unanswered in above works. An effort has been made to understand this aspect of the colonial police.³⁹

The first chapter deals with the origins of the police forces in the colonial north Indian and particularly in the Punjab. The chapter describes the political factors such as annexation of the Punjab in May 1849, the role of subsequent developments and mutiny of 1857 in

³⁵ D.A. Low (ed), *Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917-47*, Arnold- Heinemann, London, 1977, p.4. In the 1930's there were 200,000 police in British India, 33,000 of them in the United Provinces, the majority of them under British officers.

³⁶ Gyanesh Kudaisya, *Region, Nation, "Heartland": Uttar Pradesh in India's Body Politics*, Sage, New Delhi, 2006, p.93 and also pp.102-03

³⁷ R.C.B. Bristow, *Memoirs of the Raj: A soldier in India*, London, 1974, p.28 quoted in Kudaisya, *Region, Nation, "Heartland"*, p.93

³⁸ This is how one historian has captured the contemporary attitude of army regarding the aid to the civil power: “In the 1920's and early 1930's hardly anyone expected that the Indian Army, or for that matter the British Army, would ever again fight a 'first class enemy' ...But there was another preoccupation, infinitely distasteful, with no medals to be won and every prospect of disgrace if one acted too soon or too late, too little or too much: that was Aid to the Civil Power, a euphemism for riot control...It was effective: it controlled riots, with no more Amritsars. But there were a few occasions when soldiers were breast-to-breast with furious rioters snatching at their rifles because an officer, remembering Amritsar, hesitated too long.” Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Indian Army and the King's Enemies, 1900-1947*, Thames and Hudson, 1988, n.d. , p.120

³⁹ See chapter IV.

deciding the constitution of the Indian Police Commission of 1860 and its recommendations. The two decades after the Police Act of 1861 are studied to locate the character of the police force during this period. The second part of the chapter deals with the shift in the Government of India policy regarding the police in late 1870's. The impact of the perceived Russian threat in the north western frontier on the police force of the province is discussed. The chapter ends with an appraisal of the service conditions of the constabulary by the end of the nineteenth century.

The second chapter begins with 1901, when the North Western Frontier Province was carved out of the Punjab. The role of the martial races theory and its impact on the recruitment is discussed in this chapter. It is also important to understand the character, skill formation, and training of the force. It is followed by a discussion of the service conditions of the constabulary during the subsequent decades till independence. An other contribution of this chapter is to study the interaction between the army and the police force of the province.

The third chapter is related to the second chapter. It begins with the review of partition historiography and the role of police during the partition violence. The chapter explains why Muslims were always in majority in the police force of the province. It is also important to understand the role of communalism in shaping the history of the police of the Punjab.

The fourth chapter is a study of the institution of 'punitive police'. The relationship between the punitive police and political agitation is analysed in this chapter. A case study of the Akali movement during 1920-25 describes how the role of army declined during the movement. However more repressive practices such as 'punitive police' compensated the absence of army. A conclusion is given at the end of all the chapters.

In terms of sources, the present work is focused on the annual administration reports of the police for the province of the Punjab, other government reports and publications,

legislative council and assembly proceedings, and files of the Home department of the Government of India in National Archives of India. The partition of the Punjab also led to the partition of provincial government records. Therefore the provincial government records are not easily available. At Punjab State Archives, Chandigarh, sources are rich for the twentieth century but scanty for the nineteenth century. However it is expected that a greater use of primary sources will be made in the future research.

Chapter I

Origins: 1861-1900

"...anyone who surveys the police forces of the Empire, at whatever period, expecting to find so many replicas of the Irish constabulary, will be disappointed and indeed bewildered"

Richard Hawkins (1991)¹

The Punjab was annexed by the British on 29th March 1849. Immediately after annexation, the Board of Administration was constituted having "wide powers and unrestricted control over all matters pertaining to the Punjab". Experienced officials like Henry Lawrence, John Lawrence, and C.G. Mansel were appointed in the Board of Administration. Apart from dealing with the Khalsa army, native aristocracy and law and order, it undertook fairly extensive public works. A general disarmament of the population was carried out in the 'Punjab proper'. The number of arms seized and surrendered of all kinds was around 119, 796. The administration argued that this measure led to the pacification of the territory: "it is worthy of remark that the robbers and murderers, subsequently captured, have never been found with effective weapons. Their arms were either rudely manufactured, or worn out and rusty with age."²

The province of the Punjab was strategically important for the British Indian Empire. The province shared boundaries with independent powers in the North West. The presence of the North West Frontier and war-like tribal people posed a challenge for the maintenance of law and order. The incidence of violent crime, particularly murders, was exceptionally high

¹ Richard Hawkins, "The 'Irish Model' and the Empire: A case of reassessment", in David M. Anderson and David Killingray (eds), *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830-1940*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1991, p.19

² *General Report on the Administration of the Punjab Proper, for the years 1849-50 & 1850-51*, p.56. 'Punjab Proper' implies the area between Sutlej and Indus rivers.

in the Punjab.³⁴ The crime of dacoity particularly in the north western districts was like an annual epidemic. The movement of the trans-frontier migrants posed another challenge to the law and order situation in the province.⁵ By the end of the nineteenth century, the apprehension of Russian advance towards the British Indian Empire had important implications for the law and order machinery of the province.

Accordingly after the annexation of the Punjab, a strong police force was organised in the province. In March 1849, the police force of the Punjab was established consisting of two branches: a military preventive police and a civil detective police. The civil detective police consisted of a regular contingent paid by the state, and the city watchmen and rural constabulary paid by the people.

The 'military preventive police' consisted of six regiments of foot (around 5400 infantry) and twenty-seven hundred troops of horse (cavalry), with each regiment having its own commandant. It was superintended by four British officers. The infantry furnished guards for jails, treasuries, frontier posts, city gates, and escorts for civil officers, and for treasuries in transit. The cavalry were posted in detachments at the civil stations, while smaller parties were stationed at convenient intervals along the grand lines of roads, for patrolling purposes.⁶ The first four regiments were formed of old soldiers of the Khalsa army and were applauded by the *Punjab Administration Report* for the year 1852 for their military background: "they are good soldiery men and have behaved well and in point of material they

⁴ The annual number of murders in the province far exceeded than any other province of the British Indian Empire. For instance, in 1897, the ratio of murder to the population was 1 to 150,765 persons in Bengal, and 1 to 68,978 in North Western Provinces, while for the Punjab the ratio was 1 to 28,933.

⁵ Neeladri Bhattacharya, "Pastoralists in a Colonial World", in David Arnold and Ramachandra Guha(ed), *Nature, Culture and Imperialism: Essays on the Environmental History of South Asia*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995

⁶ *Report of the Committee Appointed by Government to consider certain questions connected with the Police Administration of the Punjab*, Lahore, November 1899 to February 1900, The Punjab Government Press, Lahore, 1900, p.1

have been much improved in the last 2 years by the discharge from the ranks, with pension or gratuity according to length of service, of a number of old and worn out soldiers nearly all of whom bore marks of wounds received in the wars of Ranjit Singh".⁷ During the Crimean War, one regiment volunteered for military service and made significant contributions.

By April 1857, the total strength of the 'police force' in the province had increased to 23, 226 men of all ranks.⁸ The force played a significant role during the sepoy mutiny: apart from disarming of the Bengal Army stationed in the Punjab, it actively took part suppression of the mutiny. Accordingly the expenditure and strength of the force significantly increased. In the beginning of 1860, the strength of the civil police had risen up to 11,292 men, and that of the military police to ten battalions of infantry containing 9,059 men, and 2400 troops of horse and various bodies of mounted police with a total reaching up to 4,357 cavalry men. The total strength, in the beginning of 1860 was 24,708 men with an annual cost of Rs. 35,69,671.⁹

At the time of the mutiny, in the colonial north India, there was considerable confusion and anarchy within the state structure. A large number of native Regiments were disbanded in haste and at the same time new armed forces were raised in different parts of the Indian sub-continent. During the mutiny and immediately afterwards, the policy in colonial north India, was to raise armed constabulary or military police.¹⁰ Army was rejected as an institution of control during this period. For instance in Oudh a detailed plan was submitted by the Chief Commissioner for Oudh for raising a 'military police' for Oudh in 1858. This

⁷ G.S. Aujla, *Second to None: A history of Punjab Police*, Mohindra Brothers, Ludhiana, 1995, p.11

⁸ It consisted of 12,853 military police, 9,123 civil police, and 1250 city police.

⁹ In addition there were the Peshawar and Derajat Mounted and Foot Levies serving as police with an expenditure of 9.5 Lakhs of rupees; and the Cantonment Police subordinate to the Military Secretary to the Punjab Government, the Thugee Police, and the Canal Police; the last three bodies incurred an annual expenditure of around Rs. 65, 000. The Military Police Battalions were officered by 8 Captains and 2 Lieutenants of Police; the Civil Police being subordinate to the District Officers. *Report of the Committee Appointed by Government to consider certain questions connected with the Police Administration of the Punjab*, Lahore, November 1899 to February 1900, The Punjab Government Press, Lahore, 1900, p.2

¹⁰ See, J.C.Curry, *The Indian Police*, 1932, reprint, Manu Publications, New Delhi, 1977, p.32

force was planned to be 3000 Cavalry and 9000 Infantry strong. Half of the cavalry was to be armed with lances, pistols and swords for each troop and other half was with carbine and each troop. One pouch supplied for ammunition was suggested to carry 10-15 rounds. Infantry, on the other hand, was to be armed with muskets, bayonets, and swords. In case of Infantry, one pouch was decided to contain 40 rounds.¹¹

A large contingent of military police was raised in the Bengal Presidency. Contemporary Major General W.R. Mensfield, Chief of the Staff remarked on 17th September 1858 how in every province large bodies of Military Police had either been formed, or were in the course of formation. At the moment these bodies amounted to 58,000 men to whom Government of Bengal added 10,000 more men. He expected in near future the number of Military Police in Bengal Presidency would rise to 80,000 men.¹² It was proposed that many of the Local Levies raised during the mutiny period be transferred to the military police of the provincial Governments where these Levies were raised. He further objected to the appointment of Military officers to these newly raised Military Police forces on the orders of the Supreme Government without the permission of the Commander in Chief which was “a matter affecting in the most intimate manner the vital principles of Military organisation”.¹³

The ‘military police’ as an armed force of natives was second only to the Bengal Army in terms of numbers and strength. The existence of such a native force was dreaded for political reasons. The horrors of mutiny were still fresh in the British minds. The Indian Police Commission was set up in 1860 to review the whole situation and to introduce police forces in a planned manner. The Police Commission Report of 1860 argued for a Civil Constabulary for all India by substituting all diverse police establishments, both Civil and

¹¹ ‘Scheme for the military Police in Oudh’, Foreign (Pol), 13 August 1858/237-39, NAI, p.40

¹² At the time of mutiny the Bengal Army consisted of about 128,000 Indian and 23,000 Europeans. When the Mutiny broke out, the whole of British force amounted to 36,000 against 2,57,000 Native soldiers.

¹³ Military Department Proceedings, January 1859, NAI, GOI, pp.67-68

Military.¹⁴ The continuation of the existing system relying heavily on Military Police was considered dangerous as it tended to the employment of a large number of men who were 'virtually soldiers'. Further, an ordinary policeman was reputed to be politically less dangerous, for though trained in arms he was not generally expected to carry or possess arms. In contrast a Military policeman was nothing but 'really a Native Soldier'.¹⁵ After mutiny the strength of the military forces itself was to be 'kept at the *minimum* required for strictly Military purposes'. Police Commission was of the opinion that military force 'should not be frittered away in doing civil duties'.¹⁶ All the existing 'separate Establishments maintained for the watch and guard of Jails, of General and Tuhseel Treasuries and escorts; and all River and Road Police, of whatever denomination' were expected to be gradually relieved and absorbed into the Constabulary.¹⁷ This rationalisation of the armed forces significantly reduced the risk of another mutiny.

Purging the Evils

At the recommendations of the Indian Police Commission, a draft bill was framed which eventually took shape of the Police Act V of 1861. The main features of this bill, which reorganised the entire police in India under one system, were the complete separation of the military armed force from the police; the police to be under the executive government for all police purposes- protection, prevention, and detection; the police department to be a separate branch of administration, with an Inspector-General under each Government; the Inspector-General to have under him Deputy Inspector General and other subordinates; a large increase in the amount of European supervision; and complete severance of executive, police and judicial functions.

¹⁴ *Police Commission Report, 1860*, p.2

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.4

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.6

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.10

Among other details of the recommendations of the Police Commission, it was provided that the pay of the lowest grade of the constabulary should at least be equal to the average ordinary wages of the unskilled labour and that of officers and commissioned officers 'being such as to put them above temptation and to form an inducement to respectable men to enter into the force'. The Police Commission had provided a Police force for the Punjab at an expenditure of 24 Lakhs per annum. In October 1860 a Committee of Punjab Officers was appointed to consider the draft Police Bill, which recommended the carrying out of the provisions of the draft with minor modifications.¹⁸

The organised police forces in the sub-continent came with the Act V of 1861, also called the Police Act of 1861.¹⁹ Before Act V of 1861 the police was divided between civil and armed components. Under the old police system there were police companies on whom devolved the work of supplying guards for Treasuries, Jails, Camps, municipal police. It was abolished on the introduction of the system under the Police Act, and the all policemen were trained alike and subjected to the same kind of discipline.²⁰

Prior to the passage of this landmark legislation, the police in the Punjab consisted of Police Battalions, Mounted Police, Civil Police, Cantonment Police, Thuggee Police and Canal Police. The first two were under Captains of Police; the civil police was under District officers; and the Cantonment police was subordinate to the Military Secretary. The police battalions performed quasi-military duties, which were afterwards performed by the

¹⁸ *Report of the Committee Appointed by Government to consider certain questions connected with the Police Administration of the Punjab*, Lahore, November 1899 to February 1900, The Punjab Government Press, Lahore, 1900, p.2

¹⁹ The Police Act was introduced by Sir Bartle Frere and passed in 1861

²⁰ 'Police Re-organization and Reserves', Home (Police), March 1889/140-175, NAI, GOI, p. 205

constabulary. The Mounted police was employed on patrolling roads and as personal orderlies. The sanctioned cost of this force in 1860 was rupees 43,33,465.²¹

In 1861, the police in the Punjab was divided into two areas: cis-Indus and trans-Indus. The police in the cis-Indus districts was organised according to the Police Act of 1861 but in the trans-Indus districts it continued to follow the old system where the police was under the control of Deputy Commissioners and was subjected only to the Inspection of the Inspector General of Police. The trans-Indus police included Peshawar and Derajat Divisions, consisting of the six districts of Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan.²² Even as the trans-Indus police was incorporated within the Punjab police in 1863, it remained a distinct body in practice.

In 1861, the total strength of the cis-Indus police was 13,307 with an annual expenditure of Rs. 24, 09, 576.²³ The cis-Indus police included the 26 districts of the Punjab. In the cis-Indus part of the province, the police administration was under the guidance and control of the Inspector-General of police, assisted by three Deputy Inspectors General who each had a charge of a circle consisting of from six to ten districts. Each body of police in district was under the charge of a District Superintendent of police, the latter was assisted in many districts by an Assistant District Superintendent of police. The police in each district was subject to the general control and direction of the Magistrate of the District.

The force in each district consisted of Imperial, Municipal, Cantonment, Ferry and Watch-and-Ward police. The Imperial police were employed on police duties, properly so called, and quasi-military and miscellaneous avocations. The other branches apart from the Imperial police were optional and their existence depended on the presence of Municipalities,

²¹ 'Proposed retrenchment in the Police expenditure of the province of Punjab' Home(police), 2 April 1870/15-22. GOI, NAI, p.24

²² *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for the year 1867-68*, p.38

²³ Anandwarup Gupta, *The Police in British India. 1861-1947*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1979, p.38

Cantonments, and rivers in a district. Subsequently, a new adjunct was added in the form of railway police.

The men on police duty, properly so called, were located at police stations, out-posts, and road-posts. In each district there were around eight to sixteen police stations. However on an average, strength in each police station was fifteen police officers. Under the jurisdiction of each police station, there were many out-posts and road-posts on the main lines of roads. They were either for patrolling purposes only, or for both patrolling, reception, and despatch of prisoners.²⁴

A 'great' financial crisis occurred in 1861-62 and a considerable amount of pressure was put on the Government of Punjab to reduce expenditure on police. Colonel Bruce, the Government's General Adviser on Police matters, was appointed by the Government of India to scrutinize the police expenditure of the entire province with a view to reduce it to the lowest cost compatible with efficiency. In the Punjab, Colonel Bruce, visited all the principal localities of the province and estimated the police requirements of the province. Colonel Bruce, after going through various details fixed Rs. 26 Lakhs as the minimum sufficient annual budget for the police of the Punjab. Sir Robert Montgomery, Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, regarded Rs. 26 Lakhs for the police of the province as insufficient. However, he agreed to accept Rs. 26 Lakhs as the cost, provided that the details of expenditure were left in his hands. A formal agreement to this effect was drawn up and ratified by the Government of India on 20 December 1862.²⁵

²⁴ 'Proposed retrenchment in the Police expenditure of the province of Punjab' Home(police), 2 April 1870/15-22, GOI, NAI, p.10

²⁵ 'Proposed retrenchment in the Police expenditure of the province of Punjab', Home(police), 2 April 1870/15-22, GOI, NAI, pp.25-26. See also *Report of the Committee Appointed by Government to consider certain questions connected with the Police Administration of the Punjab*, Lahore, November 1899 to February 1900, The Punjab Government Press, Lahore, 1900, p.3

In 1869, another financial crisis compelled the Government of India to again scrutinise the police charges for the whole of India. The orders issued as regards the Punjab province involved the abolition of the four appointments of Deputy Inspectors-General and of twenty three out of the twenty nine appointments of Assistant District Superintendents. On the representation of Sir Donald McLeod these orders were cancelled and the Local Government were left to effect a saving of one lakh by the reduction of one of the posts of Deputy Inspector-General and seven Assistant District Superintendents and by reducing the mounted branch of the force.²⁶

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The character of the force remained indifferent to the principles on which the police force was raised. For instance, few important principles which were recognised by the Indian Police Act of 1861 were: (1) The civil Police were to protect the community against all local criminal classes, and to put down all riots and local disturbances; (2) they were to be drilled and disciplined to enable them to deal with large masses of non-military men; (3) they should carry arms, where there were chances of their dealing with armed or desperate men, or again where peculiar duty required armed guards; (4) the strength of the force was not to exceed purely police requirements, but (5) a reserve was to be kept at some head-quarters.²⁷

After the raising of the police forces in the provinces, the major effort, as a general policy, in contrast to the above stated principles, was to keep the forces aloof from all military elements and rebellious communities. The political considerations played an important role from 1860's to late 1870's in determining the character of the constabulary. However, almost all the first officers of the newly raised constabulary were provided by the military men and after the 1861 Act, entire battalions of infantry and cavalry were incorporated in the newly raised police forces in North India. Still an effort was made to

²⁶ 'Proposed retrenchment in the Police expenditure of the province of Punjab' Home(police), 2 April 1870/15-22, GOI, NAI, p.43

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.223



check the military elements in the newly raised constabulary.²⁸ The constabulary was placed under strict European control. The natives were excluded from all important ranks particularly in the command ranks. For instance, in North Western Provinces, the Reserve Inspectors, all Europeans, were entrusted with the inventory, maintenance, and distribution of arms and ammunition and the drilling and firearm training of constables. Most of these Reserve Inspectors were former non-commissioned officers from the British and Indian armies. In their various duties, the reserve inspectors were aided by a handful of special police 'Sergeants' whose ranks were also restricted to Europeans.²⁹

The bitter memories of the mutiny kept on informing the British approach to the newly raised constabulary. There were widespread rumours in some portions of the press in India and England towards the newly raised constabulary, particularly in NWP. It was reported that a new armed force amounting to 20,000 had arisen, second only to the late Bengal Army. Major E. Tyrewhitt, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Meerut and Rohilkund Divisions, dismissed such rumours as groundless and opined that there was no need to panic, he explained:

"...the instructions imparted, though it makes the police a useful and responsible set of men, would go but a small way to render them formidable in the field as an enemy...Military men know well that it is only by continuous and incessant daily drill and instructions that a Regiment can be kept up to proper state of discipline and efficiency; such a state is not only unnecessary for the Police Force, but it is impossible, as the men are with few exceptions, all employed on civil duties, which alone precludes any amount of Military organisation; in fact they have none".³⁰

In spite of raising a disciplined constabulary in 1861, the approach of the Government of India remained cautious. The numbers were considerably reduced in various efforts, and all military elements were kept under check. The presence of military officers in the police

²⁸ See David A. Campion, "Watchmen of the Raj: The Dilemmas of Colonial Policing in British India, 1870-1931" Unpublished Ph.d Thesis, University of Virginia, 2002

²⁹ Campion, "Watchmen of the Raj", p.43

³⁰ See *Annual Police Administration Report of North Western Provinces for the year 1864*, Appendix B, p.XV

force at the higher ranks was severely dreaded by the colonial state. Within a few years of raising the constabulary, efforts were made to reduce the large number of military officers employed in the police department: "So much military feeling was introduced, and so much attention paid to military training, that it seriously distracted from the efficiency of the police from its proper duties; and this evil though greatly moderated, continues to exist".³¹ In 1867, the Government of India entertained strong objections, on both civil and military grounds, for the employment of military officers in the police forces of the sub-continent. The Government of India was in the favour of gradual reduction of the number of military officers in the Police establishment. Accordingly orders were issued in August 1867 to reduce the number of military officers in the police forces. It was left to the local governments' discretion to decide the proportion of military officers in their provinces according to their circumstances.³²

Further, initially the composition of the police forces was designed in such a way as to offset possibility of any serious rising from within the ranks. The policy was also pursued to keep troublesome communities out of the ranks of the constabulary. The mutinous elements were purged from the police force. For instance, in 1872, the government removed all Kukas from the police force for their rebellion. The Namdhari or Kuka sect, a reformist movement in Sikhism, was founded by one Balak Singh (1799-1862) of village Hazro in the North West frontier region. He was succeeded by his disciple, a carpenter Ram Singh. Ram Singh shifted the headquarters of the Namdharis from Hazro his own village Bhaini in Ludhiana district. Ram Singh introduced some changes in the forms of worship, appearance, and form of address which distinguished his followers from the rest of the Sikhs. Following his example, his disciples chanted hymns and, like dancing dervishes, worked themselves into a state of

³¹ Quoted in Dharam Pal, "Indian Administration by Sir John Lawrence, 1864-69", Unpublished Ph.d Thesis, Panjab University, Chandigarh, n.d., p.34

³² 'Employment of Military officers in the Police', Home (Police), August 1884/30-47, NAI, GOI, p.1

frenzy and emitted loud shrieks (*kuks*); they came therefore to be named Kukas. Ram Singh also became an ardent protector of cows. By 1863, Ram Singh had a well knit following of several thousand disciples. By this time, the anti-British leanings of the sect and its agenda to re-establish a new dynasty of Khalsa raj was also visible to the government.

In 1871, few Kukas, murdered some Muslim butchers and their families in Amritsar and later at Raikot in Ludhiana district. For these crimes, eight Kukas were hanged and others were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The government imposed orders restricting Ram Singh to his village and forbade the assemblage of Kukas at religious festivals. But Kuka passions had been inflamed, and, on the Maghi festival in January 1872, they flocked in the hundreds to Bhaini. Ram Singh had great difficulty in convincing his followers to return peacefully to their homes. However, one band of around 125 men decided to ignore their guru's advice and attacked Malerkotla, a Muslim state where slaughter of cows was permitted. On the way to Malerkotla the gang raided the house of the Sikh Zamindar of Malaudh to acquire arms. They were challenged by the Zamindar's retainers and, when they entered Malerkotla (a princely state), by the state police. L. Cowan, the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana, joined the pursuit and captured 68 of the band. Cowan sent a note to his Commissioner, T.D. Forsythe, and without any formality blew up 66 of the prisoners by tying them to the mouths of cannons.³³

The result was, all future enlistment of Kukas in the police was stopped. Those who were in the service were transferred to such districts where the 'sect had little sympathy'. Even though the number of the Kukas in the police at this time was not very large, it was suggested that all Kukas should be dismissed from the constabulary ranks.³⁴ The Commander-in-Chief concurred that all Kukas should be dismissed from the ranks of the

³³ Kushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, 1839-1974, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1981, pp.127-132

³⁴ 'Dismissal of Kukas serving in the Police', Home (police), April 1872/67-70.GOI, NAI, p.1

native army as well. The Kukas were accused of being 'subject to an organisation requiring their unhesitating obedience to the secret mandate of its leaders'. The object of the sect was regarded as 'the overthrow of the British Government and the re-establishment of the Khalsa Raj'. The threat from the Kukas as such was not considered very serious but the government dreaded the possibility of them spreading the sedition in ranks of the army and constabulary/ Lieutenant Colonel G. Hutchinson, Secretary to the Government of Punjab, said: "...it is a measure of prudence to eject them from positions, which enable them to propagate sedition in the ranks of those on whom we depend for its suppression"³⁵

In the beginning there was also an effort to balance various communities and to take an advantage of natural hostilities among nationalities³⁶. An analysis of the composition of the forces of the two provinces of the Punjab and North Western Provinces reveal this. In the beginning a significant number of 'Hindoostanees' were introduced in the police force of the Punjab. In 1861, the proportion of the Hindustanis in the total strength of Punjab Police was around ten per cent. In the year 1862, when the number of the force was increased, the proportion of Hindustanis remained around ten per cent. The police at this point of time was divided, at the lower level, into the ranks of Inspector, Deputy Inspector, Sergeants, and constables. At the level of intermediate command ranks the proportion of Hindustanis was much greater. Almost one fourth of the total Deputy Inspectors in the province of Punjab were Hindustanis. Geographically as far away as Peshawar Division, the proportion of Hindustanis in the division was around 12 per cent. In Peshawar District almost 16 per cent of the Police were Hindustani.³⁷ Similarly in the case of North West Provinces, the Hindustanis were balanced by the elements drawn from Punjab. In NWP, the constabulary was divided at two levels- (1) Chiefs and Head Constables and (2) Mounted constables and

³⁵ 'Dismissal of Kukas serving in the Police', Home(Police), April 1872/76-70, GOI, NAI, p.1

³⁶ The expression 'nationalities' is vaguely applied here.

³⁷ *Annual Police Administration Report for the province of the Punjab for the year 1862*, (henceforth *PARP*, 1862)

Foot constables. In the first category, 'Sikhs and Punjabees' constituted almost 8 per cent of the total sanctioned strength in 1863. In the second category, 'Sikhs and Punjabees' constituted almost 6 per cent in the same year.³⁸

Table 1.1: Composition of the police force in the Punjab, 1861-1862

Ranks	Year	Punjabees	Hindoostanees	Total Sanctioned Strength	Proportion of Hindoostanees in percentage	Punjabees in percentage
Inspectors	1861	63	9	81	11.11	77.77
	1862	62	14	83	16.86	74.69
Deputy Inspectors	1861	401	107	503	21.27	79.72
	1862	385	110	504	21.82	76.38
Sergeants	1861	1734	227	1980	11.46	87.57
	1862	1776	240	2051	11.70	86.59
Constables	1861	11337	1056	12623	8.36	89.81
	1862	11752	1115	13075	8.52	89.88

SOURCE: *Annual Reports on Police Administration in the Punjab and its Dependencies for the year, 1862*, see Appendix No. IX., page number not given.

Table 1.2: Composition of North Western Provinces' police force in 1863

Communities	Chief and Head Constables	Mounted and Foot Constables	Total
Christians	23	15	40
Mohamedans	1348	7756	9104
Brahmins	398	3829	4227
Rajpoote	256	3024	3289
Hindoos of inferior castes	1026	6877	7903
Sikhs	217	1029	1246
Punjabees	62	399	461
Gurkhas	110	555	665
Grand Total	3451	23484	26935

SOURCE: *Annual Reports on the Administration of Police in the North Western Provinces for the years, 1863*, Appendix No. X, p. 35

³⁸ *Annual Police Administration Report for the North Western Provinces for the year 1863*, see Appendix No. X.- 'caste return of the North West Provinces' constabulary'.

During 1870's, apart from purging the rebellious elements and balancing the forces with hostile communities, there were efforts to reduce the strength of the police, primarily due to political reasons. Pressure was brought by the Government of India on the provincial governments to reduce the numbers in the police. More than numbers, the emphasis was to keep the force away from military discipline and training: there was a general feeling that excessive military discipline existed in the then police force thereby making them soldiers which posed a threat to the colonial state.³⁹ In the Punjab, J.W. Younghusband, the Inspector General of the Police in Punjab, kept on defending the *status quo* and was against any reduction in numbers. Younghusband had helped Charles Napier in organising the Upper Sind police in 1843. Younghusband had closely seen the evolution of police from 1843 onwards and was aware of all shades of opinions. His experience and views carried a considerable influence with the Government of India. Younghusband was not only against any reductions in the numbers of the Punjab police but was actually in favour of raising a well trained, armed, disciplined force. However, the Government of India was not in favour of raising such a force for it could turn into a potential threat to the state. Against such a viewpoint, Younghusband once wrote,

“...When the nature of our tenure in India is considered...we feel the necessity for treading cautiously. It is natural that amongst many these considerations should lead to a strong belief in the political danger of training a large body of armed police scattered over the country; doubtless there is a considerable truth in that, but the necessity is far greater than the danger...if the police are unarmed they may in themselves be less a danger to the State; but lessening their power for evil also in a far greater degree diminishes their power to be good. A knife may cut the fingers of a carver; that is a reason for caution in using it, not for giving up carving...many who argue against the propriety of arming the police assert that, if armed insurrection takes place, they [police] would be the first to array themselves against Government”⁴⁰

³⁹ 'Proposed Retrenchment in the police expenditure of the province of Punjab', Home(police), April 1870/15-22. GOI, NAI, p.27

⁴⁰ In a letter to Secretary, Government of Punjab, see 'Reductions proposed to be made in the police expenditure of the Punjab', Home(Police), September 1876/39-41, GOI, NAI, p.19

Younghusband defended an armed police force in case of the province of the Punjab due to strategic location of the Punjab. As he wrote on 28 July 1875,

“...bearing in mind the fact that the Punjab is almost surrounded by independent states, that in one-half of the districts there are no troops, and that the head quarters of several districts are more than 100 miles away from a cantonment, the political strength to Government in having an organised body of men carefully supervised, well trained, with a through knowledge of the country and under the direct and complete control of Government, can scarcely be exaggerated”.⁴¹

Further, he added the military advantages of raising such a force,

“...should an army have to take the field against a foreign enemy, we could furnish from the police to its ranks 5000 volunteers within a week and another 5,000 within the month- men deficient in drill but accustomed to discipline and inured to fatigue”.⁴²

Younghusband remained Inspector General of the Police of the Punjab in its formative phase from 1863 to 1876. However, in his period, against his wishes, a considerable number of reductions in budget and strength of the police were carried out on the directives of the Government of India. In fact, the frequent reductions, provoked Younghusband to question the very idea of the Indian Police Commission of 1861 and its recommendations: “I beg once again to record a strong protest against the constant changes in the police, recommended or ordered...the present order...would result in subverting the whole system now carried out in the Punjab. It might almost be inferred that the Police Act was the crude idea of an inexperienced committee, instead of being framed on the life long experience and recorded opinions of the ablest and wisest of our administrators”.⁴³

In contrast, the Government of India pursued a policy of caution regarding the police forces. In the background, the horrors of a future mutiny loomed large. Efforts were made, at least in police, to check its numbers and resources. In 1877, a new scheme was proposed for

⁴¹ In a letter to Secretary, Government of Punjab, see *ibid*, p.19

⁴² In a letter to Secretary, Government of Punjab, see *ibid*, p.20

⁴³ In a letter dated 27 December 1869 to Government of Punjab see, ‘Proposed retrenchment in the Police expenditure of the Punjab’ Home (police), 2 April 1870/15-2, NAI, GOI, p.34

reductions in the strength of the provincial police force of the Punjab but the Government of Punjab did not consider it expedient.⁴⁴ All these reductions in the budgetary allocation and strength of the force had significant repercussions for the police force of the province of the Punjab. The Police Act of 1861, in principle recognised the existence of armed reserves at district headquarters to deal with violent outbreaks but by early 1880's there were no such armed reserves and no arms to quell the violent disturbances. In the first three decades of the raising of the constabulary the policy remained that of caution and this undermined the strength and capability of the force. However, things started changing by the early 1880's probably due to larger strategic concerns.

Arming the Police: 1885-1900

In the 1880's, there was a widespread apprehension of Russian advance towards British India.⁴⁵ A possible war with Russia required a smooth supply of men and resources to the frontier. Accordingly, a vast network of railways and roads was laid down in the Punjab. The Russian advance in the Central Asia had significant repercussion on the evolution of the police force of the province. The mobilisation of resources and men also called for a stronger grip on the law and order situation in the Punjab. Accordingly, a strong armed police force was envisaged for the Punjab. For instance, in the year 1880, 5,276 new smooth bore .656 carbines were issued to the 9306 foot police of the province. Significantly, the emphasis was on the arming of the frontier and central districts of the Punjab as the ten districts of Umballa [read Ambala] circle were not considered in this scheme.⁴⁶

The earlier policy regarding the introduction of the military element in the police of the Punjab now underwent a reversal. By early 1880's the number of military officers had

⁴⁴ 'Contemplated reductions in the Police Department of the Punjab', Home (police), 31-33/ January 1877, GOI, NAI, p.3

⁴⁵ For a contemporary discussion see W.P Andrew, *Our Scientific Frontier*, W.H. Allen & Co., London, 1880, pp.87-101

⁴⁶ 'Issue of 5276 new Smooth-bore carbines for use of Punjab Foot Police', Home (Police), February 1880/34-35, NAI, GOI

significantly declined in police forces of the sub-continent. Since 1867, the number of more lucrative appointments in the police department had significantly declined due to frequent retrenchments and abolitions of superior ranks. On the other hand the emoluments paid for the regimental service had significantly increased. As a result there was a serious lack of interest among military officers to join the police. Accordingly the number of military officers in the police forces of the sub-continent declined from 215 in the year 1867 to 90 in the year 1881. A Government of India despatch dated 1 September 1882 while underlining the role of police in the prevention and detection of crime, at the same time advised that certain advantages might be derived from the admixture of military officers in the superior grades.⁴⁷ However, the provincial governments were not in favour of recruiting military officers in the police from the 'police' point of view. The provincial governments of Punjab, North Western Provinces, Bengal, Madras etc all argued that the enlistment of military officers in the police was essential neither for practical work nor for the maintenance of morale of the police service. The provincial governments were wary of the existing military officers as 'they were full of grievances, real or imaginary, and this detracted them greatly from their efficiency and rendering of willing service'.⁴⁸

In spite of the opposition, it was directed by the Government of India that a minimum of ten per cent of superior grades should be set aside for military officers in all provincial police forces. The proportion was kept particularly high in case of the Punjab. In case of the Punjab, the recruitment of the military officers up to 25 per cent of the total strength of the superior grades was sanctioned due to the presence of the North West Frontier.⁴⁹ The strategic implications of the colonial polices on the police force of the Punjab were far reaching indeed.

⁴⁷ 'Employment of Military officers in the Police', Home (Police), August 1884/30-47, NAI, GOI, p.17

⁴⁸ *ibid*, p.21

⁴⁹ *ibid*, p. 43

The character of the Punjab police also differed substantially from the other provinces, mainly due to presence of the frontier. The military ingredient in the composition of the Punjab police was kept higher than other provinces. For example, in the neighbouring North Western Provinces and Oudh, the police were divided in two broad divisions: armed and civil. The duties of the civil police consisted of recording and detection of ordinary crime. The armed police were charged with special functions of guarding jails, public offices and treasuries, of furnishing escorts and of repressing riots and disorder. After recruitment, all recruits whether they joined the armed or the unarmed section of the police were subjected at district headquarters to a year's training and discipline with arms. Those who afterwards joined civil duties were supposed to continue drill in the formation of fours but 'it was impossible to continue their practice in the use of arms and the prescribed rifle exercises without largely increasing the armament of the police and establishing a second and costly reserve to fill the places of the men absent in rotation for drill'.⁵⁰

In case of Punjab no such division among armed and unarmed police existed. Prior to 1875 policemen were enlisted for Provincial, Municipal and Cantonment Police separately and only the first were trained to use the firearms, although all were more or less drilled and disciplined. After 1875 all the several bodies of Police were merged into one force and every man enlisted for general duty was thoroughly instructed in the use of firearms and in company drill. Every man was drilled and disciplined and was made to go through practice of fire-arms annually.⁵¹ In Punjab each Policeman was required to fire 12 shots a year only at Target practice with ball ammunition.⁵² In contrast police in other provinces was poorly trained in the use of fire arms. In case of North Western Provinces, in some of the encounters with outlaws and dacoits, hundreds of rounds of ball cartridges were fired on by the rank and

⁵⁰ *ibid*, pp.3-4

⁵¹ 'Police re-organization and Reserves', Home (Police), March 1889/ 140-175, NAI, GOI, p. 187

⁵² 'Armament of the Police', Home (Police), July 1900/64, NAI, GOI,p.2

file of the police and sometimes not even a single one was hit due to lack of training in fire-arms.⁵³

Even then, due to frequent retrenchments in numbers and budget, in the earlier decades, there were no armed reserves in the Punjab. During the year 1888-89 an assessment was made of the armed police in different provinces of the raj. In Punjab, the Local Government was of the opinion that there were no such reserves as the Government of India contemplated viz. 'reserves of semi military police armed and disciplined on the same principle as the Irish Constabulary and possessing better organisation, better equipment, better discipline and better personnel than the rest of the force'. Even then it was believed that the Punjab police force was much more of a semi-military character than the police of some other provinces.⁵⁴

Colonel O. Menzies, Inspector General of Punjab, was of the opinion that since 1863 the strength of the police force had fallen off due to frequent reductions resulting from financial reasons; in order to increase the number of Deputy Inspectors and to improve the pay of the foot constables. Further the extra duties for the police had increased. As a result there was no reserve of sufficient strength for even ordinary relief for sick and leave. Colonel O. Menzies concluded that the strength of the police force was not sufficient to meet sudden local outbreaks, and even when outbreaks were anticipated, it was with difficulty that police was able to arrange sufficient force to meet the situation.⁵⁵ The fire-arms used by the force were very poor in quality. The major fire-arm used by the police in the Punjab was antiquated Victoria muzzle-loading carbine. Colonel O. Menzies, believed it to be of little use for rapid firing when a small party of Police was called upon to act with fire-arms in a serious riot.

⁵³ For such cases see. 'Armament of the Police', Home (Police), July 1900/64, NAI, GOI, p.1

⁵⁴ C.L.Tupper, Secretary to GOP to A.P. MacDonnell, Secretary to GOI, Home Department, dated 3rd September, 1888, 'Police Re-organization and Reserves', Home (Police), March 1889/140-175, NAI, GOI, p. 179

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 187

The provincial government was not in favour of raising an armed police force in the province. The provincial government preferred army rather than police to deal with violent outbreaks. By the end of the nineteenth century, the role of army in maintenance of internal order was much more appreciated than arming the police with sophisticated arms. For instance the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab remarked: "On the whole subject it may be said with reference to reserves that outbreak in towns do not often occur; that it has hitherto been found practicable to deal with them; and that if regard be had to any serious emergency it must be remembered that in the Punjab, at all events, there are at the large places plenty of troops. It seems better to run the risk of one or two people being occasionally killed or wounded in a riot than to incur the very considerable expense which would be necessitated by the maintenance of such resources as are described by the Government of India".⁵⁶

The Government of India was, however, in favour of raising armed reserves and arming them with better arms. Till late 1880's, the police forces of the raj unlike army were provided arms according to local conditions prevailing in the countryside. The centralised Ordnance Department dealt with the provisioning of weapons for the army but police was a local subject. As a result the arms of the police forces of the raj varied from one province to another. It was for the first time during the year 1889 that Ordnance Department was held responsible for arming of the police forces of the raj. In October 1889, the Government of India decided that the Ordnance Department was the proper source of supply of all arms and ammunition required for the police forces in India. Henceforth, Ordnance Department was supposed to arrange arms and ammunition required for the police reserves.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ C.L. Tupper, Secretary to GOP to A.P. MacDonnel, Secretary to GOI, Home Department, dated 3rd September, 1888, 'Police Re-organization and Reserves', Home (Police), March 1889/140-175, NAI, GOI, p. 183

⁵⁷ In a letter dated 2nd October 1889, from Secretary to GOI, Military Department to the Director General of Ordnance in India, File. "Supply of Arms and Ammunition to the Police Forces in India including the Reserves", Home (Police), 1889/143-146, NAI, GOI, p.

Even then financial contingency played a much more important role. At this time Government of India planned the re-arming of police reserves with more efficient smooth-bore breech-loading carbine. But due to financial contingency an innovation was made. The Government of India considered the possibilities of converting Snider rifles into smooth-bore weapons for issue to ordinary Police reserves. After a series of trials it was ascertained that the rifles can be converted by the Ordnance Department with the result that the police forces would get a fairly good weapon, safe and reasonably durable, as well as much cheaper than a smooth-bore breech-loading carbine. The cost of the converted arm was estimated to be a little more than Rs. 5-8-0 as compared with Rs. 40 for the approximate cost of a breech-loading smoothbore carbine. These Snider rifles were made available, since the army abandoned them in large numbers at this point of time in favour of more sophisticated arms. The police were fed upon the leftover of army.

During 1880's, a serious consideration was given to raising an armed force in the province of the Punjab. However, despite of a serious consideration of the role of the police in the wider scheme of internal defence of the sub-continent, the service conditions of the police remained poor. No serious consideration was given to the quality, literacy, training, and service conditions of the men. In consequence, the police force in the Punjab was a most unstable one. The whole constitution of the constabulary rested on the theory of easy availability of abundance of cheap unskilled labour. No efforts were made to recruit literate men in the force neither were they imparted any significant training after recruitment. In 1862, the wages recommended by the Indian police commission for the constabulary were equivalent to those of the unskilled labour. In the following decades, the wages of the unskilled labour improved but there was no comparative increase in the pay scale of the constabulary. For instance, in 1870, the Inspector General of the Police of the Punjab, Lieutenant Colonel G. Hutchinson wrote: "During the last decade wages have risen

immensely. A coolie on a railway can earn with less exertion, and no risk or responsibility, as much as a constable".⁵⁸

During 1880's, there was a significant increase in the number of resignations and desertions in the police of the Punjab. In this decade, due to a number of reasons, labour was in great demand. In 1883, the IGP of Punjab police force, Lieutenant General A.H. Bamfield, argued that in the increasingly competitive scenario it was difficult to get hold of suitable recruits. He understood the work available due to construction of railways' networks and canals as major lucrative employments available for the men. At this time, railway networks were under huge construction. The development of railway network in Punjab was also closely entangled with the Frontier policy of the Raj.⁵⁹ Similarly by the end of the nineteenth century canals were laid down all over Punjab plains which later on transformed some of the barren lands into the most fertile plains of the world. Often called canal colonization, along with Railways, these colonial endeavours created huge employment opportunities. In turn the canals created possibilities for the spread of agriculture and thus an increasing demand for labour. Immediately after annexation the British government repaired, renovated and expanded the old canals and then, beginning from the 1880's, built a number of new water works with the help of borrowed funds. Incidentally, Punjab received the lion's share of the government investment in canal building activities. At the same time the methods of lifting water from wells improved significantly and this led to an expansion of well-lands. The result was that by the close of the British rule Punjab came to possess one of the largest irrigation

⁵⁸ *PARP*, 1870, p.33

⁵⁹ To contain the Russian threat an efficient logistical base to facilitate troop movement and provide the necessary ordnance was required. From just 410 miles in 1872, the railway network grew to 600 miles in 1882, nearly trebled to 1725 miles in 1892, and increased by over 2000 miles more by 1902 to stand at 3086 miles. By 1931, the North Western Railway System was the largest in India, constituting nearly 23 per cent of the total open mileage in India, and operating a total of 7092 miles. See Rajit K. Mazumdar, *The Indian Army and the Making of Punjab*, New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2003, pp. 56-58

systems in the world.⁶⁰ Thus development of agriculture further constricted the number of men available for police employment.

An end result of this was the 'dynamic' nature of the constitution of the constabulary. In other words, there was no stability in the police department. Each year the police department of the Punjab lost around ten per cent of its strength on an average during this period and recruited almost the same number each year. The nature of the police department differed greatly from the army. While in army the resignations were taken very seriously from the very beginning and rules were frame to control such resignations and desertions, in case of police no such rules existed till the World War II when the resignations became a serious challenge before the state.⁶¹ A major reason for the large number of resignations was inadequate remuneration from the police employment. Most of the recruits were unskilled, illiterate, and hereditary agriculturists. Whenever the avenues for better wages were available somewhere else or favourable agricultural conditions prevailed men often left the force for such opportunities leading to large scale resignations and desertions. It was particularly difficult to enlist skilled persons, during those times, not only in police but also in army. As by the end of the nineteenth century, it was remarked by a contemporary, a Tarkhan Sikh 'can rarely be persuaded to enlist on sepoy's pay as an average carpenter can make Rs.20 a month in his village'.⁶²

⁶⁰ M.M. Islam, *Irrigation, Agriculture and the Raj, Punjab 1887-1947*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1997, p. 13

⁶¹ See 'Measures to control resignations from the police and to ensure the maintenance of public utility services in the time of War or in a state of emergency due to subsersive movment', Home (political), 21/4/37, 1937, GOI, NAI

⁶² W.H.McLeod, "Ahluwalia and Ramgarhias: Two Sikh castes" in his *Exploring Sikhism: Aspects of Sikh Identity, Culture and Thought*, OUP, New Delhi, 2000, p.227

Table 1.3: Dynamic Composition of police force in the Punjab from 1877-1896

	Total Sanctioned Strength		Enlisted during the year	Numbers Left the Force		Total left the force (percentage of the sanctioned strength of men)	Number of men with ten years service and upwards in the force.
	Officers	Men		With pension and gratuity	Other wise (resignations, desertions, deaths, otherwise)		
1877	555	19609	1739	534	1326	1860 (9.48%)	
1878	560	19495	1698	1547 (?)	1683		826(?)
1879	559	19533	2376	386	2027	2413 (12.35 %)	7829
1880	564	19502	2643	348	2005	2353 (12.06 %)	8071
1881	567	19827	2290	431	1953	2384 (12 %)	8076
1882	580	19827	2329	353	1717	2070 (10.44%)	8242
1883	575	19921	1593	303	1681	1984 (9.95 %)	8454
1884	597	20000	1644	256	1360	1616 (8%)	8320
1885	633	19548	1611	358	1556	1914 (9.79%)	8565
1886	643	19726	2227	357	1728	2085 (10.56%)	8958
1887	654	19600	2077	374	1577	1951 (9.95%)	8919
1888	657	19438	1553	298	1541	1839 (94.60 %)	8743
1889	660	19515	1588	270	1633	1903 (9.75%)	8943
1890	660	19530	1566	259	1242	1501 (7.8%)	8981
1891	674	19763	2198	349	1727	2076 (10.50%)	9014
1892	675	19806	1973	319	2054	2373(11.98%)	9080
1893	674	19606	2188	396	1868	2264 (11.54%)	8869
1894	676	19535	1844	265	1697	1962 910 %)	8944
1895	677	19481	1919	309	1655	1964 (10.08%)	8887
1896	679	19295	1674	268	1654	1922 (9.96%)	8935

Source: Statistics of British India for the Judicial and Administrative Departments subordinated to the Home Department, Superintendent of the Government Printing Press, Calcutta (from the annual series from 1877 to 1896 at NMML)

In fact the one tenth of the strength of the force was renewed every year. For instance, in 1887, not less than 2,077 recruits were enlisted in the force while the total sanctioned strength of the force was slightly less than twenty thousand. In 1892 there were 1,106 men who resigned from the force without any pension or gratuity, 33 deserted the force and 267 were dismissed. Along with these there were other 97 men who were discharged from the service for other reasons. Another characteristic of these years was the high death rate among the constabulary. In the year 1892 around 551 men died. Such a large number of deaths were peculiar of those times when a large number of people died due to disease and epidemics. As a result the sanctioned strength of the police force remained around twenty

thousand in the last three decades of the nineteenth century but the number of men who spent ten or more than ten years in the service was always around 8000 men. Broadly, each year almost one tenth of the force due to pensions, resignations, dismissals, desertions, and deaths left the force. This put a huge pressure on the police force of the province. This forced the government to recruit around two thousand of men each year to keep the number of men up to the required sanctioned strength.

Conclusion

The sepoy mutiny of 1857 played an important role in the formulation of the Police Act of 1861. In the few decades following the Act of 1861 a policy of caution was pursued. While in principle a strong armed constabulary, on the Royal Irish Constabulary model was conceived in practice all military elements were suspected in the police force. In the beginning, the policy was to keep the police forces of the sub-continent aloof from military discipline and arms. In the wake of mutiny, the newly raised civilian constabularies, which lived and worked in close contact with the masses, were dreaded by the British. It was understood that newly raised constabularies after army, were a major threat to the British rule in India. A possible police mutiny was always in British mind and this resulted into a strong check on all military influence and elements in the newly raised constabularies in the colonial north India. The numbers, resources, and military elements were consistently reduced during this period. A particular attention was paid to remove all rebellious communities from the constabulary. This approach hindered the development of police forces for three decades, particularly in the colonial North India.

On the whole, the earlier policy of keeping distance from the military discipline underwent a significant reversal during the early 1880's. With the apprehension of Russian advance the policy regarding not only army but police forces also underwent significant

changes. By this time the Government of India was in favour of improving the armament of the police force and raising of armed reserves. This was a reversal of the earlier policy of keeping the police forces immune from military discipline. However, the service conditions of the rank and file remained neglected. The men were often imparted very rudimentary training and literacy was no criteria till a very late period. In fact the investment on men in imparting specialized skills was such a low priority that it was not a very serious crisis where one tenth of the force was renewed each year. Initially, the men were paid equivalent to the wages of the unskilled labourer. Subsequently, the wages of the unskilled labour increased but that of constabulary remained stagnant. The men often abandoned the police in favour of more lucrative opportunities. The service conditions, training, and pay and emoluments of the men gradually improved but only after the nineteenth century had moved on.

Chapter II

Consolidation: 1901-1947

"... the Punjab Police, and more especially the additional police, are recruited from exactly the same type of men as the Indian Army, the Indian Army which has won the Punjab such renown all over the world, and that the Punjab Police have excited the admiration to my personal knowledge of innumerable visitors to this province. The first thing that a stranger coming to Lahore says to me- "What a splendid body of police you have!"

Honourable Sir Henry Craik on 10 March 1931¹

The police as an organised institution was established with the passing of the Indian Police Act of 1861. The next four decades of the history of the police in the Punjab were the decades of experiment. The police had not received importance as an institution of control till the beginning of the twentieth century. In the late nineteenth century, the army was considered a major institution of control. However things started changing with the beginning of twentieth century. The role of Indian Police Commission in 1902 was an important milestone in this regard. The police became a major institution of control by the end of the colonial rule. By the beginning of the twentieth century new considerations started shaping the history of the police in the Punjab.

An important change by the beginning of the twentieth century was the recasting of the map of the province of the Punjab. In 1901 the province of the Punjab was bifurcated in two provinces. The North-western part of the province including the trans-Indus districts, with an area of 42,647 sq Km, was made into North Western Frontier Province. The intention was to deal with the troublesome frontier tribes more effectively. On the turn of the century, an average district in the Punjab had an area of 8,682 sq km and a population of 701,046 persons. The comparable average for British India was 11, 473 sq km and 931,000 persons,

¹ The Finance Member, Government of Punjab in the provincial Legislative council, see *Punjab Legislative Council Debates*, 25 February-25 March, 1931, Vol. XVIII, Lahore, 1931, p.527 (henceforth *PLCD*)

respectively. In both area and population, an average district in the Punjab was smaller than its counterpart elsewhere in British India.² In terms of police-population ratio, the Punjab was the most policed province of the British India.³

Martial Races Theory

The recruitment policy of the police also underwent significant modifications in the Punjab. An important development by the beginning of the twentieth century was the adoption of the martial races theory by the police force of the province of the Punjab. The martial races theory was in the beginning developed by the army officials for the composition of the armed forces. However, gradually this theory was taken over by the police force of the Punjab. The martial races theory was based in essence on the civilisation differences between the East and the West. As one contemporary commentator observed: "It is one of the essential difference between the East and the West, that in the East, with certain exceptions, only certain classes can bear arms; the others have not the physical courage necessary for the warrior".⁴ Apart from the late nineteenth century biological determinism, cultural factors were also accounted for the 'martial' attributes: "they tended to be rural; were hardened by harsher climates and often inhabited marginal agricultural lands; and they were relatively uneducated and thought to be 'clannish'."⁵ The preference for uneducated, rural, and ignorant communities for army was also due to political reasons. The illiterate rural masses were

² Surya Kant, "Administrative Space in the British Punjab" in Reeta Grewal and Sheena Pal (ed), *Pre-colonial and Colonial Punjab: Society, Economy, Politics and Culture*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2005, pp.221-223

³ In Punjab, there was one policeman for a population of 1,087 in 1912. In the same year in United Provinces, Madras, and Bengal there was one policeman 1313, 1263 and 1909 people respectively. The all India figure for the British India was 1267. See *Statistics of British India, for the year 1916-17, 1918-19*. However, in terms of area-police ratio, the Punjab figure was almost same as of the overall British India figure.

⁴ Quoted by Douglas M. Peers, "The Martial Races and the Indian Army in the Victorian Era", in Daniel P. Martson & Chander S. Sundram (eds), *A Military History of India and South Asia: From the East India Company to the Nuclear Era*, Praeger, Westport, 2007, p.34

⁵ Quoted by Douglas M. Peers, "The Martial Races and the Indian Army in the Victorian Era" p.34

generally considered more loyal than their urban counterparts.⁶ However, the martial races theory remained of marginal importance till the end of the nineteenth century.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the policy regarding the British Indian army underwent a change due to the apprehension of a Russian advance.⁷ From the late 1870's it became increasingly clear that the Indian Army might have to defend against Russian attack. Accordingly, the policy regarding the Indian army underwent a change and efforts were made to raise an army strong enough to withstand the troops of a first rate European power.⁸ The idea of an army consisting of the best fighting races of India was conceived. In 1879, the Eden Commission in a report to Parliament on the Indian Army noted, "The Punjab is the home of the most martial races of India and is the nursery of our best soldiers". Accordingly, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the Punjab became one among the favourite recruiting zones for the British Indian Army. As a result, on the eve of the First World War, Punjabis accounted for sixty-six per cent of all cavalymen in the Indian Army, eighty-seven per cent in the artillery and forty five per cent in the infantry. These figures indicate the highest rate of military participation ratio from a particular province ever experienced in colonial India, suggesting that army was likely to have exerted an unusually dominant influence in the social, economic and political development of the Punjab.⁹ The Punjab, with 8 per cent of the population of India, provided half of the British Indian army in 1911. The Sikhs, who were one per cent of the Indian population, accounted for 20 per cent of the total number of Indians in the military service.¹⁰

⁶ David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, Macmillan, London, 1994, pp.25-29

⁷ In 1868 the Russians seized Samarkand; in 1880-81 they absorbed the lands which bordered Afghanistan; and in 1885 a frontier incident raised the prospect that they might even invade that state. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, pp.11-12

⁸ After the mutiny, the policy was to balance different Presidency armies against each other and to check their numbers.

⁹ Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, Sage, New Delhi, 2005, p.18

¹⁰ Bernanrd S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge*, OUP, New Delhi, 1997, p.110

The Punjab became the favourite recruiting ground for the army of the raj. It was no accident therefore that over time the martial race theory was imbibed by the police in their recruitment strategy. The 'martial' qualities and priorities were particularly valued by the police officers. Military priorities and prejudices greatly influenced police recruitment and training since a large number of police officers, responsible for the recruitment and training of the constabulary, were from the army background.¹¹ In case of the police in the Punjab, the shift to martial races theory as a recruitment policy for police took place only in the early twentieth century.

Until the late nineteenth century, police recruitment policies accorded no specific preference for the martial races. By the end of the nineteenth century, character of the force remained heterogeneous and socially inclusive and no particular preference was made for any 'martial' community.

Table 2.1: Religion and Caste Composition of police of the Punjab in 1871

Religion	Caste	Officers	Men
Christians		62	5
Muslims		266	10,272
Hindus	Brahmins	34	1,589
	Rajputs	25	1339
	Gurkhas		20
	Khattaris & etc.		37
	Hindus of all other castes.	92	2,782
Sikhs	Sikhs	84	3,279
	Kukas		48
	Mazabis		168
Grand Total		20,122	

Source: *PARP, 1871, Statement G*

¹¹ The same happened in Madras. see David Arnold, "Bureaucratic Recruitment and Subordination in Colonial India: the Madras Constabulary, 1859-1947", *Subaltern Studies*, Vol. IV, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1985, pp.8-9

As, the table 2.1 shows, in 1871, ten years following the Police Act of 1861, a good number of Brahmins were recruited, each year into the constabulary. In 1871, out of total recruits among Hindus in the Punjab, the Brahmins were the highest number of men in the provincial constabulary, recruited from a specific caste. The Brahmins were considered a literate class and were usually better than other communities in their educational background. Most probably, the Brahmins were valued for their clerical efficiency. Apart from Brahmins, there were Rajputs, and most importantly Khattaris, a merchant and trading caste. Among Sikhs, there were not only Jat Sikhs but also a good number of lower caste Sikhs called Mazabis.¹² The Kuka Sikhs were removed after the Kuka revolt (1872). There was no explicit preference for rural recruits. Both Brahmins and Khattris were primarily urban communities. The policy underwent a significant reversal in early twentieth century.

Even by the beginning of the twentieth century, the hold of 'martial races' theory was still embryonic in police establishment of the Punjab. However in actual numbers the 'martial races' and rural 'agricultural communities' dominated recruitment than non martial urban classes. In 1901, total 1805 men were recruited of which 1266 were recruited from villages and 529 from 'towns'. Among these 1805 recruits, there were still a good number of Brahmins and Khattris among Hindus and Sheikhs and Sayads among Muslims. These were considered as literate castes and probably their services were valued for clerical works. In the subsequent decades there developed an explicit preference for rural 'martial races'.

¹² As discussed somewhere else the 'Sikhs' were usually understood as 'Jat Sikhs' by the British. This understanding became more and more shaper by the beginning of the twentieth century.

Table 2.2: Caste Background of men recruited during the year

Castes	No. of Men Recruited
Sikhs	135
Sheikhs	113
Sayads	156
Mughals	58
Pathans	144
Bilochis	23
Jats	222
Rajputs	227
Arains	49
Afghans	3
Brahmans	138
Katris	78
Kaiths	9
Kalals	6
Kambohs	1
Minas	2
Christians	2
Other Castes	409

Source: *PARP*, 1901, p.16

Secondly, the Punjab government also developed a preference for the rural recruits. The urban middle classes had considerably developed in post 1849 period. The urban communities- the Khatri, Aroras, and Banias- had already matured during the Sikh rule of Ranjit Singh. When the British took advantage of they took advantage of their dominant position. The British offered them opportunities to these communities in the lower ranks of administration, in the legal and medical professions, and in school and colleges.¹³ By the beginning of the twentieth centuries, these urban communities developed an anti-British ideology. The British abandoned urban classes in favour of rural communities.¹⁴ The Land Alienation Act of 1901 was a key development in their direction. The open official favour to the dominant land owning castes started with the enactment of the Punjab Alienation of Land Act of 1901. The object of this measure was to place restrictions of the transfer of agricultural

¹³ Ravinder Kumar, *Essays in the Social History of Modern India*, Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1983, p.109

¹⁴ see *ibid*, p.110

land in Punjab with a view to checking the alienation of agricultural land from agricultural to non-agricultural classes. For defining 'agriculturists' certain castes, mistakenly referred to as 'tribes' by the British administrators were set aside and designated as 'agricultural tribes' for the first time in the Punjab.¹⁵ The other British ideological preferences also played a crucial role. Apart from their physical attributes, these rural men were considered loyal and passive. The British generated a folk ethnography that portrayed the Indian peasant-no matter whether from ignorance, passivity, or appreciation for the Raj- as politically passive and respectful of authority, and therefore in British view, loyal.¹⁶

By the early twentieth century, the best recruits of the police for the province were men from the 'martial races' and 'agricultural tribes'. In fact all martial races were also dominant 'agricultural tribes', though all agricultural tribes were not martial races. In other words the recruits for the police were invariably from the 'peasant' background or the hereditary occupation of the martial races was agriculture. Firstly, these recruitment preferences were vigorously pursued by the army and were then imbibed by the police of the Punjab. The police recruited men on the same lines as army did. In brief, they had a common recruiting pool. But the remunerative value of the constabulary was very poor. Throughout the colonial period the salary of a constable remained equivalent to that of an unskilled labourer's wages. In fact, the recruitment of the constabulary was based on the theory of 'abundant cheap manual labour'. However, in reality, the police in the Punjab, recruited the same men as the army did and this became a major recruitment concern of the police in the Punjab during the first half of twentieth century.¹⁷

¹⁵ Prem Chowdhary, *Punjab Politics: The rise of Sir Chhotu Ram*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1984, pp.21-22

¹⁶ Richard G. Fox, *Lions of the Punjab*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985, p.84

¹⁷ 'Resoultion passed by the Conference of Provincial Home Ministers held in 1939 on the subject of modernising police equipment; modification of the existing system of police organisation which is probably on the theory of abundant cheap manual labour', Home (police), 70/2/39, 1939, NAI, GOI

The second problem was due to the agrarian background of the recruits. The prevalence of a favourable agriculture at home could induce large scale resignations from the constabulary. In fact, as the salary of a constable was not more than that of an agricultural labourer, the men usually joined the police when agriculture did not do well and returned to agriculture when the situation improved at home. The second, option available for men serving in the police was to join the army whenever they got an opportunity. For instance the Police Administration Report for the year, 1909 argued, "complaints are general as to the difficulty in obtaining suitable recruits due to the improved pay prospects of sepoys in the Indian Army and the high wages paid for manual labour."¹⁸

The bias of the recruitment policy of the government of the Punjab in the favour of dominant agricultural communities and the 'martial races' gave a caste character to the police constabulary. In this way, all other castes and communities were excluded from the constabulary. In case of Sikhs, Jat Sikhs were the desired recruits. The Sikhs belonging to other castes were seldom recruited. For instance, even by early 1930's there was hardly a Sikh belonging to non-Jat 'Lobana' community in the police.¹⁹

By the second decade of the twentieth century, there were demands by the depressed classes' leadership to recruit them in the police department.²⁰ The response of the Government was in negative and it was stated that circumstances were not in favour of such recruitment, as Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency remarked that the recruitment of the depressed classes will be possible only when: "there is evidence that the depressed classes are treated on an equal footing by all sections of the community, or when the Government is satisfied that enrolment of members of these classes will satisfy the requirements of efficiency and be in the best interests of the composition of the service, Government will be quite prepared to

¹⁸ *PARP*, 1909, p. 24

¹⁹ *PLCD*, 7-25 November, 1932, Vol. XXII, Lahore, 1933, pp.42-43

²⁰ The Depressed classes, Scheduled castes, Dalits, and Untouchables are used interchangeably in original.

throw open recruitment to them, provided they come up to the physical and other standards required for all recruits".²¹

According to the 1931 census, there were 1,440,750 persons belonging to depressed classes in the province of the Punjab; not even a single one of them was 'officially' in the police employment. The most of the population of the depressed classes was concentrated in Eastern and Central Punjab.²² Even by the last decade of colonial rule in the Punjab, it was not possible to find out a single Inspector, Sub-Inspector or even an Assistant Sub-Inspector in the Police Department among the members of the depressed classes.²³ By February 1940, there were only two 'scheduled castes young men' in police in the entire district of Gurgaon.²⁴

The question of the recruitment of the depressed classes in the provincial services was picked up by the Unionist Government only in 1937. It was only for the first time that a member belonging to scheduled castes was appointed as Naib-Tehsildar in the province. The Superintendents and Deputy Superintendents of police were directed to recruit more 'untouchables' in the police. By all efforts, during 1938, only eleven members of the scheduled castes were recruited in the police force.²⁵ In March 1939, instructions were issued by the Inspector General of Police in Punjab to recruit depressed classes. In fact, it was stated that the Government was 'anxious' to recruit a certain number of men from the Scheduled classes in the police, 'provided the suitable candidates are forthcoming'.²⁶ During 1937-39, the first two years of the Unionist Government only thirty two members belonging to scheduled castes were recruited. This performance was hailed by the Unionist Government as

²¹ *PLCD*, 18 July-21 November 1927, Vol. X-B, Lahore, 1928, p.990

²² For a district wise statistics of the depressed classes population see, *PLCD*, 25 February-31 July 1933, Vol. XXIII, Lahore, 1933, p.22

²³ *Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, 25 February-11 March 1941, Vol. XVI, Lahore, 1942, p.296 (henceforth *PLAD*)

²⁴ *PLAD*, 4 March-29 March 1940, Vol. XII, Lahore, 1941, p.655

²⁵ *PLAD*, 24 October-12 December 1939, Vol. X, Lahore, 1940, p.1162

²⁶ *PLAD*, 1 April-30 April, 1940, Vol. XIII, Lahore, 1942, p.905

a worthwhile achievement as the 'Premier' said: "what more could you expect from any Government in the short span of three years?"²⁷ Among depressed classes, those who joined the service, was alleged, were often badly treated by their colleagues and compelled to leave the service. One Sardar Moola Singh alleged in the Legislative Assembly: "I have received numerous complaints of this nature from the members of my community. A constable, Mehnga Ram by name, who belonged to my district and was five feet nine inches high was treated so badly that the poor boy had to resign".²⁸

The Recruitment

The recruitment was done by the District Superintendents of the Police mostly in their own districts. The minimum physical standards were five feet seven inches height and thirty three inches chest measurement in the age group of twenty to twenty five.²⁹ Invariably the men of the 'best' castes were recruited with a natural preference for educated men.³⁰ After the Great War, a large number of relaxations were given to the men from the regular army and ex-soldiers who left the army for reasons other than misconduct, or in case of certain castes such as Dogras. In addition, there were direct appointments for the ranks of Sergeants and Deputy Inspectors from the 'men of good family and education' by the Deputy Inspector General and Inspector General of Police.³¹

'Agriculture' and 'army' were the two major rivals for the police as far as recruitment was concerned. On the recommendations of the Indian Police Commission of 1860, the pay scale of constable was decided equal to the average ordinary wages of unskilled labour. In 1862 the rate of pay of Constable was Rs. 6 and Rs. 7. Between 1862 and 1900, the

²⁷ *PLAD*, 25 February-11 March, 1941, Vol. XVI, Lahore, 1942, p.309

²⁸ *ibid*, p.296

²⁹ *Gazetteer of Muzaffargarh District, 1929*, Lahore, 1930, reprint Sang-e-meel publications, Lahore, 1990, p.286

³⁰ *Indian Police Commission (Punjab Papers)*, Vol. I, 1902, NAI, p.8

³¹ *ibid*, p.8

pay of the wages of the unskilled labour significantly increased but there was no corresponding increase in the pay scale of constabulary. In 1862, the pay of a police constable and that of a native soldier were almost equal.³² In the following decades, the pay of a constable remained stagnant while that of a sepoy became much more lucrative. The basic pay of a sepoy was seven rupees for most of the nineteenth century but successive increases in 1890's significantly improved the salaries of sepoys. It was increased to nine rupees in 1895 and eleven rupees in 1911. Wartime bonuses, and *batta* paid on overseas or frontier service, were an important additional source of income and with these, a sepoy could earn twenty rupees a month by the last years of the Great War. The poor pay scale was a major hurdle in securing men of 'right stamp' for the police in comparison to army.

The recruitment was mostly done, as a rule, in the District in which the men served or in the neighbouring districts. The recruitment was most satisfactory in the North-Western districts of the province. In contrast, the recruits were not readily available in the Central and South-Eastern Punjab. The availability of recruits was directly linked to the performance of agriculture in an area.³³ The districts of Jhelum, Gujarat, Mianwali, Attock, and Rawalpindi in north-western Punjab provided most of the recruits. In these districts land was less fertile and arid. The irrigation was poor and agriculture mostly relied on unreliable monsoon rains. Crops often failed to mature. Therefore the supply of recruits was most reliable in these districts. The majority of the population of these districts were Muslim. As a result the Muslims were always in a majority in the police ranks. For instance, in Gujarat District, in 1920's, the force was mainly composed of Muslim agriculturists of various tribes with Gujars

³² *Report of the Committee Appointed by Government to consider certain questions connected with the Police Administration of the Punjab*, Lahore, November 1899 to February 1900, The Punjab Government Press, Lahore, 1900, p.26

³³ The same pattern is noticed by David Omissi in case of army recruitment. He writes, "In the Punjab, for instance, the better-off cultivators of Lahore, Lyallpur, and Gujranwala districts usually provided far fewer soldiers than those who tilled poor soils or small farms in Rawalpindi, Jhelum or Kangra". See David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, Macmillan, London, 1994, p.52

predominating. About ten per cent of the force was Hindu and five per cent Sikhs.³⁴ In spite of the small presence of Hindus and Sikhs in the force it was reported that there was no difficulty in getting the right stamp of recruits: “there is no difficulty in getting the right stamp of recruits; in fact men were turned away even during the War in spite of the drain caused by the army”.³⁵

The recruitment was a local affair unless the recruits were not easily available. Therefore, local circumstance played a predominant role in deciding the composition of the police force of a district. In few districts, such as Multan District, the majority of the police was recruited from outside the district particularly from ‘the Northern districts of the province’.³⁶ In the Mianwali District, the men recruited were often the residents of Mianwali or the neighbouring districts. It was reported that the recruits from the Mianwali were not as a rule found to be very satisfactory ‘owing to their disinclination to serve at a distance from their homes, and their propensity to resign during harvesting operations’.³⁷ In Muzaffargarh district, the local men were not preferred for the ‘physical standard of men was poor’, hence men of other districts, chiefly Mianwali and Jhelum, were recruited.

Table 2.3: Recruitment in Muzaffargarh District, 1927-28

year	Recruits from Muzaffargarh District	Other than Muzaffargarh District.
1927	15	15
1928	23	37

³⁴ *Gazetteer of Gujrat District, 1921*, Lahore, 1921, reprint Sang-e-meel publications, Lahore, 1990, p.151

³⁵ *ibid.*, p.151

³⁶ *Gazetteer of the Multan District, 1923-24*, Lahore, 1926, reprint Sang-e-meel Publications, Lahore, 1990, p.258

³⁷ *Gazetteer of the Mianwali District, 1915*, Lahore, 1915 reprint Sang-e-meel Publications, Lahore, 1990, p.199

In the districts of the South-eastern Punjab, the recruits were not easily found. The recruitment in the Hindu majority districts of south-eastern Punjab such as Ambala, Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, and Karnal was often unsatisfactory. Many a times, recruits were often recruited from north-western districts of the Punjab and even the neighbouring North Western Provinces (later on United Provinces). By 1932, 80 per cent of the constabulary in Ambala District was recruited from outside the district and majority was Muslim. One Kanwar Mamraj Singh Chohan carefully avoiding communal prejudice said in the legislative council: "Fortunately in that district [Ambala] the Hindu and Muslim Rajputs are the descendents of the same progenitor. There is no Hindu-Muslim question in the district. I therefore do not raise the communal question, for I consider it to be below my dignity. But it is most regrettable that Shahpur or Jhelum people should be recruited in the district as police constables..."³⁸ As a result, the Muslims dominated at the level of constabulary, Head constables, and Sub-Inspectors in the Hindu majority districts of south-eastern Punjab.³⁹ This had important repercussions at the time of the partition of the Punjab in 1947-48.

In fact, as early as 1871, the Muslims were in majority in the police constabulary ranks in the province of Punjab. In 1871, in terms of religious affiliations, there were 5 Christians, 10,272 Muslims and 6,463 Hindus amongst the lower constabulary. Therefore as early as 1871, Muslims with an around 60 per cent presence were in a majority among the lower ranks of the police.⁴⁰ The Sikhs were not easily available for recruitment for the police. In the year 1883, out of 1552 recruits only 114 Sikhs were enlisted. It was mentioned that of the total number [of Sikhs] more than half were of the 'less desirable castes'.⁴¹ In all probability, the poor remunerative value of the police employment was a major obstacle during this time. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Muslims were always in

³⁸ *PLCD*, 25 February-10 May 1932, Vol. XXI, Lahore, 1932, p.265

³⁹ *PLCD*, 26 July- 3 August, 1929, Vol. XIII, Lahore, 1929, pp.276-77

⁴⁰ *Annual Police Administration Report of Punjab for the year 1871*, (henceforth *PARP*, 1871), 1872, p.59

⁴¹ *PARP*, 1883, p.20

majority in the police department of the province. In 1903, 1764 recruits were enlisted in the constabulary. Out of them, 1192 or 68 per cent recruits were Muslims and 572 were non-Muslims (Hindus), which included 89 Sikhs.⁴² As majority of the constabulary was Muslim, it had a spill over effect. As there was no direct recruitment at the upper subordinate levels, most of the Head Constables and Sergeants (later on Assistant Sub-Inspectors) were promoted from the constabulary. These posts were major incentives for the constables. As a result, the majority at the upper subordinate level was comprised of Muslims. At the higher ranks the proportion was closer to the actual proportion of the population of different communities.

By the beginning of the World War I, the Sikhs had a large presence in the army. The ratio of men serving in the army to the total population of any community was highest in case of Sikhs. Therefore, while, the number of Muslims serving in the army was greater than Sikhs, in terms of their ratio to their respective populations Sikhs were better represented. The Sikhs, who were one per cent of the Indian population, accounted for 20 per cent of the total number of Indians in the military service.⁴³ In case of police service in the Punjab, the Sikhs were the least attracted community. It was repeatedly reported by the recruiting officers that they were not ready to join the police. The seriousness of the situation may be judged from the following case. In 1936, the Superintendent of Police, Lyallpur, remarked that early in the year a special appeal was issued for Sikh recruits, of whom 20 were required by the Delhi Police and 20 by the Government Railway Police, but only 8 or 10 applicants came forward, none of whom was suitable.⁴⁴ By dint of special efforts 18 recruits were produced, of whom only 8 could be selected.⁴⁵ However, the Sikhs were, as the case with Hindus, better represented in higher ranks which were more remunerative posts. As shown below, out of

⁴² *PARP*, 1903, p.16

⁴³ Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge*, OUP, New Delhi, 1997, p.110

⁴⁴ The Delhi province relied on the Punjab for the recruits of its police.

⁴⁵ *PARP*, 1936, p.24

847 Sub-Inspectors in the province in 1921, almost 159 were Sikhs. However at the lower ranks, the number remained exceptionally small till the end of the colonial rule.

Table 2.4: Sikhs in the Higher Ranks of the Police of the Punjab in 1921

Ranks	Appointments held by Indians	Appointments held by Sikhs
Assistant Superintendent of Police	4	1
Deputy Superintendent of Police	31	3
Inspectors	135	27
Sub-Inspectors	847	159

Source: *PLCD*, 25 July-10 November, 1921, Vol. II, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1921, p.210

The Hindu communalists were anxious to secure more government jobs for Hindus. In desperation, they devised an argument, according to which the major factor responsible for the oppressive and tyrannical character of the police was due to its Muslim preponderance. In 1909, a deputation of leading Hindus of the province waited and met Lord Minto, the Viceroy of India, when he visited the Punjab.⁴⁶ The deputation argued that ‘the Hindus were suffering at the hands of the police because there was a large majority of the Muhammadan police officers in the service’. As a result of which a select and confidential circular was issued directing that all possible facilities should be provided to the Hindus who may be willing to join the police department’.⁴⁷ In 1913 a resolution was passed by the Punjab Hindu Conference held at Delhi for the inadequacy of the Hindu element in the rank and file of the higher police service of the province: “in the matter of making appointments to the public services, more especially in the Police Department, undue preference had been, and was being, given to considerations of religion and creed rather than to merit, fitness and seniority in service, to the detriment of efficiency and interest of the Hindu community”. The government response to this resolution was an outright rejection of the allegation made. According to the provincial government fitness was the first consideration for any

⁴⁶ It is mentioned in the speech of Chahudri Afzal Haq (Hoshiarpur cum Ludhiana, Rural) delivered on 10 March 1927 in the Provincial Legislative Council. There was no criticism of his speech on factual grounds and therefore it can be taken as a truth. *PLCD*, 3,4, 5, January 1927, Vol. X, No.1, Lahore, 1927, pp.318

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp.318-19

recruitment. However, it was argued, if fitness alone were considered then the inequalities which were complained might have tended to be even greater than they were during those times. In other words, the government believed it had made sufficient room for communal representation even at the cost of fitness and efficiency but was unable to attract the Hindus for the constabulary ranks. It was recognised that Hindus were not ready to enter into the police service even at increased and revised rates of salaries for the constabulary. It was justified that it was not the policy of the government to increase the salaries further merely to attract the Hindus. Since Hindus don't enter at the constabulary ranks, went the official defence, it was natural that they were not adequately represented at the higher ranks which were filled by the promotions from the lower ranks.⁴⁸

Among Hindus, the 'agricultural' castes viz. mostly Hindu Jats, were always in a lead to secure more government employment opportunities for their own community. On the persistent demand of the Hindu Jat leaders, a government notification was issued in 1915, favouring the increased employment of Hindu Jats in the public services of the province.⁴⁹ Even then the Hindu recruits were not easily available and the problem escalated into a crisis during the World War I. The government of the Punjab was hard pressed during the Great War period. A large number of men in the police resigned to join the army whereas recruits for the police were not easily available. At the conclusion of the War, situation became even more serious. By the end of the Great War, the general rise in the cost of living and the corresponding rise in the wages of unskilled labour made it extremely difficult and often impossible to induce suitable men to enlist as constables on Rs. 10 per mensem.⁵⁰ The pay scale of the constabulary was revised in 1920's but it remained lower than that of the army. In case of recruitment, the army remained a major rival. The military employment in spite of all

⁴⁸ *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab*, Vol. IV, Punjab Government (Branch) Press, Simla, 1915, p.19

⁴⁹ *PLCD*, 31 July-3 August 1922, Vol. IV, no. 1, Lahore, 1922, p.64

⁵⁰ *PARP*, 1918, p.13

reforms was still considered a major competitor, as one Chaudhri Duli Chand said on 10 March 1927, in the provincial Legislative Council: "...the Hindu Jats, Rajputs, Ahirs, and Gujars, will generally not accept the post of constable carrying only a pay of about Rs. 18 per mensem. To them the military department is more attractive and there are more reasons for it. In the first place the items of future prospects, free ration and free clothing in the military department attract them which they get besides their pay."⁵¹

In contrast, the Muslim recruits particularly from less fertile districts of north-western Punjab were always in the lead to secure the police employment. The preponderance of the Muslims in the police ranks was defended by the Muslim communalist leadership. To counter the Hindu communal propaganda of accusing the preponderance of the Muslims in the constabulary as responsible for imperfect character of the police department, they devised an alternative interpretation accusing Hindus as corrupt and cowards. They said Hindus were too weak and feeble to perform the police duties adequately. Secondly, corruption in the police department was attributed to the corrupting influence of Hindus. For instance, in 1927, a good number of Hindus were recruited for the additional police force for the city of Lahore. One Shaikh Faiz Muhammad, member of the provincial legislative council seriously doubted the 'mettle' of these recruits for the police work: "these Hindu constables should be posted in Vehoa and Shah Wah stations in Dera Ghazi Khan District and Isa Khel in Mianwali district in order to test their mettle".⁵²

In this context, by 1923, the issue of communal representation of the services in the Punjab had assumed a national significance. The Fazl-i-Hussain government introduced a communal representation system in the recruitment of services. On this basis the services were to compose of 40 per cent Muslims, 40 per cent Hindus, and 20 per cent Sikhs. A

⁵¹ *PLCD*, 3, 4, 5, January 1927, Vol. X, No.1, Lahore, 1927

⁵² *PLCD*, 18 July-25 November 1927, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1928, p.1006

Pakistani historian, Zarina Salamat, argues, in 1920's, 'the Muslims continued to be under-represented in the services throughout the decade, and the Hindus overrepresented'.⁵³ However the case of the police differed from all other government departments. During the year 1925, 1633 men were enrolled. The annual report mentions that "recruitment was satisfactory in terms of numbers, but the quality of the recruits leaves much to be desired and very few Hindus and Sikhs were prepared to serve in the lower ranks of the Police on the existing rates of the pay, which were recognised as inadequate".⁵⁴ In 1926, out of total strength of the police in the province, Muslims constituted 75 per cent.⁵⁵

Table 2.5: Proportion of different religious communities in constabulary by 1941

As stood on	Total number of constables	Muslims	Hindus	Sikhs
1st January 1927	17,088	13,137 (77 %)	3,138 (18%)	765 (5%)
1st January 1937	17,781	12,997(73 %)	3,305 (19%)	1,447(8%)
1st January 1941	18,540	13,066(70%)	3,418(18%)	1,995(12%)

Source: PLAD, 1 December 1941-26 February 1942, Vol. XVIII, Lahorc, 1942, p.551

The Hindus were readily available only in those districts where the opportunities for alternative employment were meagre. For instance, the agriculture was very poor in hill districts of Kangra and Simla where recruits were easily available. In next year, 1926, it was argued: "Generally speaking recruitment is everywhere good, but the entirely inadequate pay of the constables does not attract good material from all communities and very few literate Sikhs and Hindus of suitable physique offer themselves for enlistment. It is thus impossible, except in the hill districts of Kangra and Shimla to maintain a communal balance and

⁵³ Zarina Salamat, *The Punjab in 1920's: A case study of Muslims*, Royal Book Company, Karachi, 1997, pp.390-91

⁵⁴ *PARP* 1925, p.19

⁵⁵ Muslims (15,755), Hindus (3,993), Sikhs (1,161), Others (118) cited from *Punjab Legislative Council Debate, 22 October 1926*, Vol. IX, p.230 in Zarina Salamat, *The Punjab in 1920's: A case study of Muslims*, Royal Book Company, Karachi, 1997, p.398

Muhammadans preponderance even in those districts where the Hindu element is strongest...⁵⁶

To offset, the reluctance among Hindus and Sikhs of the province to enrol themselves, in the police, an effort was made to recruit men from the neighbouring United Provinces, but the experiment had proved a failure.⁵⁷ The cultural and linguistic differences were a major hurdle. There were many districts within the provinces where it was very difficult to find 'suitable' Hindu recruits. Again the only option was to recruit from other districts of the province, which was usually a failure. As Khizr Hayat Tiwana summarised: "In the past efforts were made to remedy the deficiency...by recruitment from outside, but it was found that differences of language and climate and differences in conditions of living made it difficult in most cases for recruits from one part of the province to serve contentedly in another".⁵⁸

In the 1930's, during the depression years, the required recruits were readily available and resignations without pension and desertions declined considerably. Even in these years, the non-Muslims were not easily available. In 1933, some success was achieved in recruiting the less well represented classes, such as Hindu Jats and Jat Sikhs.⁵⁹ In 1935, 950 constables were enrolled during the year. Recruits of 'suitable type' were forthcoming in the majority of the districts, but Superintendent of Police of several districts, complained that Jat Sikhs were not coming forward readily, possibly 'because they were more comfortably off than other communities. There was also some difficulty in recruiting Hindus of the right stamp in adequate numbers'.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ *PARP*, 1926, p.23

⁵⁷ *PLCD*, 24 February-31 March, 1936, Vol. XXVIII, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1936, p.149

⁵⁸ *PLAD*, 20 January- 21 February 1941, Vol. XV, Lahore, 1942, p.556

⁵⁹ *PARP*, 1933, p.24

⁶⁰ *PARP*, 1935, p.24

In 1936, with the exception of a few districts such as Simla, Kangra and Muzaffargarh, no district experienced difficulty in securing recruits of good stamp. The report further says: "There can be little question that owing to a variety of causes service in the police is more popular than was formerly the case. Several districts comment, however, on the *difficulty of obtaining Jat Sikh recruits*".⁶¹

In 1937 again, the majority in the provinces experienced no difficulty in securing suitable recruits but Superintendent of Police in some districts including Ferozpur reported that suitable Jat Sikhs were not offering themselves for enlistment 'probably because they are well off and are not attracted by the long term service conditions which obtain in the Police'.⁶² In 1939, it was repeated that Sikhs and Hindus were difficult to obtain, possibly because they were better off communities than others.⁶³

Table 2.6: Proportion of different religious communities in force on 1 April 1942

Name of Appointments	Total number of appointments as on 1 April 1942	Muslims	Hindus	Sikhs	Indian Christians	Scheduled castes
Foot Constables (regular police)	19306	19633 ⁶⁴	3675	1929	38	31
		70.8	19	10	0.1	0.1
Foot Constables (including provincial additional police)	22611	16047	4377	2111	41	35
		71	19.4	9.3	0.1	0.1

Source: *PLAD*, 1 December 1941-26 February 1942, Vol. XXIII, Lahore, 1942, p.552

⁶¹ *PARP*, 1936, p.24

⁶² *PARP*, 1937, p.25

⁶³ *PARP*, 1939, p.20

⁶⁴ A wrong figure, probably a printing mistake, a correct one according to the percentage figure should be around 13688 men.

By April 1942, the proportion of Muslims in the police force of the province had reached up to 70 per cent in the regular police. The proportion of the Hindus was only 19 per cent and that of Sikhs only ten per cent. As stated above, officially Hindus and Sikhs were entitled to a proportion of 40 per cent and 20 per cent respectively for employment in the police department. In 1942, the situation was similar in case of the total constabulary including the temporary additional police.⁶⁵ The situation remained same until the partition in 1947.⁶⁶

‘Brain’ or ‘Brawn’

The colonial idea of the constabulary vacillated between the ‘brain’ and the ‘brawn’. The education of a recruit was no imperative for making him a good detective. After recruitment the subsequent impartation of training and skills in police work was not an important prerogative of colonial state. During the colonial rule illiterates were mostly preferred both for police and army.⁶⁷ The recruited men were invariably illiterate and there was no emphasis on literacy as a virtue. As a result by 1886 only 12 per cent of the constabulary was literate. The majority of men resembled unskilled labourers. In next ten years, by 1895, the proportion of literate men moved up to 22 per cent.⁶⁸

In the first half of the nineteenth century, after enlistment, no special emphasis was made on impartation of training and skills. Till the late nineteenth century, constables on enlistment were posted in the Lines or the District Headquarters, to learn the rudiments of infantry drills. Subsequently, they were provided with arms, accoutments, and uniforms.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ The additional police was a temporary force to aid the regular police. See the sections below.

⁶⁶ As discussed in the chapter III.

⁶⁷ “Indian Army recruits tended to come from the least literate sections of the population...Among the rural Muslim population of Hindustan and the Eastern Punjab, scarcely one in a thousand cultivators is able to sign his name”. see David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, 1994, p.27

⁶⁸ *PARP*, 1895, p.55

⁶⁹ The initial cost of clothing was deducted from the constable’s salary. It was only in 1920’s the uniform was provided free of cost.

The standard of training in Law and department rules remained very unsatisfactory.⁷⁰ The training at the district level, after recruitment, remained a major strategy for training men throughout the colonial period.

An important exception was achieved in impartation of skills and training to the men by setting up of the Phillour Police Training School(PTS). PTS was set up on 9th September 1891 in the historic fort of Phillour [now Phillaur].⁷¹ The first principal of the school was J.M. Bishop of Indian Police (IP), an Assistant District Superintendent of Police. The actual functioning of the school started from 1st January 1892. Initially, the PTS was imparting instructions to constables for promotion to the Sergeant Grade. In the term ending 25th July, 1892 an Officer's Class, later known as Upper Class, was started. It consisted of Deputy Inspectors, Probationers and Ist Grade Sergeants. Thus, in the beginning, the ranks of foot constables, mounted Constables, Sergeants of various grades, Probationers, and Deputy Inspectors were trained in the school. With effect from 22 April 1894 the school was divided into two divisions: Upper and Lower. In the Upper Division were included all officers with exception of Constables and Sergeants of 3rd Grade. The initial focus of the School was to impart training to men for six months. Therefore PTS conducted two six monthly programmes in a year. On an average one per cent of the total number of constables in each district were sent annually for a year's training in law and procedure, drill, and departmental orders.⁷² After a successful six months training they were promoted to Sergeant Grade.⁷³ During this six months training men were acquainted with law, detective work, drill, arms

⁷⁰ *Indian Police Commission (Punjab Papers)*, NAI, Vol. I, p.7

⁷¹ The Phillour fort was built by an anonymous Italian architect on behalf of Maharaja Ranjit Singh on the bank of river Satluj. After 1809 Treaty of Amritsar between Ranjit Singh and the British East India Company, the Phillour became the last defence post of Ranjit Singh's dominion.

⁷² *Indian Police Commission (Punjab Papers)*, NAI, Vol. I, p.10

⁷³ R.S. Gill and D.J. Singh (ed). *The Maharaja Ranjit Singh Fort Phillaur, 1809-2009*. Maharaja Ranjit Singh Police Academy, Phillaur, 2010, p.63. The promotions were available for non-Phillour men as well provided they showed extra-ordinary ability in detective ability, or aptitude for drill and routine work. *Indian Police Commission (Punjab Papers)*, Vol. I, p.10

etc. On the end of the course duration a written examination was held which was mandatory to pass.

Only a very small proportion of the total strength of the province could be trained in this manner. In the first half of the 1893, the total number of police men of all ranks admitted was a total of 205.⁷⁴ By 1901, the number of men entertained in the first half was around 350.⁷⁵ The local conditions and exigencies were a major hurdle in the training of men. For instance in course ending with the 31 March 1901, the districts of Simla, Rawalpindi and Jullundur could send no men due to plague operations. Apart from the old appointments, directly appointed men were also trained at PTS. These direct appointments were usually for the ranks of Deputy Inspectors, Sergeants, and Probationers. Most of these directly appointed men came from the respectable families. In March 1901, 27 such men were trained and these men were 'sons of, or closely related to Government officials in Civil and Military employ; 11 were related to Police Officers; 3 to Military and 13 to Civil Officers'.⁷⁶ In terms of religion, majority of the men in each batch were Muslim. In the batch ending with 31 March 1903, out of total 299 students there were 172 Muslim, 80 Hindu, and 47 Sikhs.⁷⁷ This remained a pattern, as majority of the constabulary was Muslim in the Punjab.

After admission in the PTS, the men were acquainted with diverse areas of police work. A major problem with PTS was that only literate men were capable of undergoing training at Phillour and since majority of the men were illiterate it was a major problem. In 1893, the question papers, at the end of the course, included assessment of knowledge of a constable in specific areas such as Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Local and Special Laws, Police Act of 1861, Evidence Act, Catechism, and Drill. A random sample of

⁷⁴ *Report on the Police Training School Phillour for the half year ending 30th June 1893*, The "Civil and Military Gazette" Press, Lahore, 1893, p. 1 [henceforth *RPTS*]

⁷⁵ *RPTS*, 31 March 1901, p. 1

⁷⁶ *RPTS*, 31 March 1901, pp.1-2

⁷⁷ *RPTS*, 31 March 1903, p. 2

few questions may give us a rough idea about what was expected of a constable after the training: (1) Define (a) criminal force (b) assault? (2) How is the arrest to be made: (a) if the person to be arrested offers no resistance and (b) if he resists? (3) Define the term "Retail" in the Excise Act (4) what are the duties of Police Officers in the Police Act V of 1861? (5) Describe the position and manner of moving of a constable when marching?⁷⁸ The rate of success in the final examinations conducted at the end of the six months training was often unsatisfactory. In the course conducted during July 1892- January 1893, 156 foot constables were enlisted in the school, out of which only 109 men or seventy per cent could successfully complete the course.⁷⁹

Initially, the idea of the PTS was not much appreciated by the officials of the Punjab police as well, as it was said: "...the best detective are frequently uneducated men, one of the stoppage of their promotion by preference given to Phillour passed men, who were said to be more often fit for clerical duty only, has a demoralising effect on the force...".⁸⁰ In 1902, certain police officers of the Punjab, favoured the idea of the PTS, but at the same time added that PTS should provide 'Masters' for training of men in the districts, on the same lines as in the PTS. This was suggested for only one per cent of the force could be relieved in each district for training at PTS which was a very small proportion of the force.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the literacy of the force came to be emphasised and it improved gradually. For instance, during the year 1910, only 30 per cent of 'men' of total constabulary were literate. The percentage of those who could read and write among the lower ranks increased to 35 per cent by 1915.⁸¹ On 1 March 1923, there were 12,408 illiterate men in the police force of the Punjab. In other words in 1923, 67.6 per cent

⁷⁸ *RPTS*, 15 January 1893, pp. 19-20

⁷⁹ *RPTS*, 15th January 1893, p.3

⁸⁰ *Indian Police Commission (Punjab Papers)*, Vol. I, p.12

⁸¹ *PARP*, 1915, p.24

of the whole were illiterate.⁸² A major hurdle in this respect was the preference for the rural recruits than urban literate classes. The rural masses were predominantly illiterate in contrast to their urban counterparts. As Sir John Maynard, the Finance Member, Government of Punjab, said on 23 March 1923:

“Let us consider for one moment, what are the elements which make up the character of force such as this police force of ours? In the first place, it consists of raw human material, it is not within the power of any of us to change. We find it brave, loyal and patient, but with those virtues there is also a certain narrowness of outlook on life due to the conditions of rural existence and there is also some lack perhaps of moral backbone. Such is our raw material...we recognise in it great virtues; we recognise in it also considerable faults”.⁸³

In 1930's, the role of literacy was emphasised and debated. The Finance Member of the Government of Punjab, Sir Henry Craik, said on 10 March 1931 in the provincial legislative council: “ We want both brawn and brain. I submit on the whole we have a pretty fair representation of both in the Punjab police...of their detective ability...a very high order has been shown both by officers in high position and by men comparatively low in the ranks, and I do not think it is fair reproach to bring against them that they are lacking in brains any more than they are lacking in brawn”.⁸⁴

Although Police was always enthusiastic to secure high literacy rates in the force but its priorities were marked by ambiguities and contradiction. Thus, the Police itself did not consider literacy as an element of efficiency, as Inspector General of Police argued in 1939 :“ It is necessary, however, to emphasize the importance of a sound grounding in duties which do not themselves require literacy, such as town patrols, guard and escort duty, and the development and maintenance of physical fitness by regular physical training-and drill. As

⁸² *PLCD*, 31 July 1922-23 March 1923, Vol. IV, 1923, p. 918

⁸³ *PLCD*, 31 July 1922-23 March 1923, Vol. IV, 1923, p.1544

⁸⁴ *PLCD*, 25 February-25 March 1931, Vol. XVIII, 1931, p.527

the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Central Range remarks, 'brawn can not altogether be sacrificed to brain'.⁸⁵

By 1940 the literacy among the lower ranks increased up to 72 per cent.⁸⁶ The 'literate' was also a vague expression and had no uniform meaning as some of these literate recruits never went to schools. For instance, in 1938, the Superintendent of Police, Ludhiana District recruited thirteen constables. Out of these thirteen, two had education till primary standard, 5 had till Middle standard, two were illiterates and the rest of the four knew either Gurmukhi/Urdu or Roman or both, but never had a formal schooling.⁸⁷

Co-option and Control: 1901-1914

The beginning of the twentieth century also led to a reconsideration of the role of the police in the maintenance of the colonial internal order. In 1902, Lord Curzon appointed a "strong and representative" Police Commission in July 1902 with A.H.L. Fraser, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, as its President and six other members including two Indians as its members. H.A. Stuart, Inspector General of Police was appointed as its Secretary.⁸⁸ The Commission submitted its report on 30 May 1903, after an enquiry of seven and a half months.

On the recommendations of the Indian Police Commission (1902), the whole scheme of the internal defence particularly during the War and other emergencies was reviewed. The Commission held that auxiliary branches of the police force like Armed Police Reserves and Mounted Police should be organised in such a manner as to enable them to deal promptly and

⁸⁵ *PARP*, 1935, p.25

⁸⁶ *PARP*, 1940, p.21

⁸⁷ *PLAD*, 10 November-2 December 1938, Vol. VI, Lahore, 1939, p.7

⁸⁸ The members were: Justice E.T. Candy, Puisine Judge of the Bombay High Court; Rameshwara Sing, The Maharaja of Darbhanga, Additional Member of the Council of the Governor General; Srinivasa Raghava Aiyangar, Additional Member of the Council of the Governor of Madras; Lt. Col. J.A. L. Montgomery, Member of the Council of Lieutenant Governor of Punjab; W.W. Colvin, Bar-at-Law of Allahabad; and A.C. Hankin, Inspector General of Police, Hyderabad State. See, J.C. Madan, *Indian Police: Its Development Upto 1905 an Historical Analysis*, Uppal Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980, pp.236-37

effectually with ordinary tumults and local disturbances without any military assistance, and also to maintain internal security in case of a general mobilisation of the field army. The Commission condemned the division of the police force between the armed and unarmed branches in Bombay and United Provinces and was in favour of the training of all men in the use of arms and drill.

On the recommendations of the commission, Armed Police Reserves were raised in the provinces. In these reserves, the recruitment of non-commissioned European officers as Sergeants or Head Constables was especially favoured. These armed reserves were raised particularly to relieve army during a great war from the internal defence. The efficiency of the armed police was an important factor in the general scheme for internal defence and the employment of ex-soldiers particularly Europeans as Sergeants or Head Constables was considered of great value during riots or disturbances. It was believed that by doing so, 'these bodies of men could keep control in a disturbed area even on withdrawal of troops in a grave emergency'.⁸⁹ The measures were taken to secure the services of Europeans ex-army or serving persons in the armed reserves.⁹⁰

After inclusion of the European ex-soldiers in the provincial armed reserves, it was the turn of the Native Commissioned Officers of the Indian Army or Viceroys Commissioned Officers. By this time, there were two main categories of officers in the Indian Army: those holding the King's commission and those holding the Viceroy's commission. The latter were all Indians and had a limited status and power of command, and were regulated by the Indian Army Act and the rules made there under. A large number of them were promoted from the ranks and a Viceroy's commission, by regulation, was within the grasp of every Indian recruit who joined the Indian army. In contrast, the King's commission was granted by His Majesty

⁸⁹ 'Employment of Reservists of the British Army in the Indian Police Forces', Home(police), April 1906, No.129, GOI, NAI, p.1

⁹⁰ *ibid*

the King-Emperor, and the status and power of command of such officers was regulated by the Army Act, which was passed by the British Parliament.⁹¹ The Viceroy, Lord Minto, himself took interest in this regard, and on his insistence, the question of employment of Native Commissioned officers of the Indian Army in the Provincial Civil Service (executive branch) and in the Police department, was taken up of the Home Department in 1909. The Army Member of the Viceroy's Council welcomed the scheme as desirable both on 'general' and 'political' grounds.⁹²

Most of the provinces were not favour of this scheme. The idea was sternly refuted in case of the provincial services. However the response was less critical in case of the police. Even in police, the response was not whole heartedly welcomed, as E. Lee French, Inspector General of Police, Punjab wrote: "We have a considerable number of graduates of good family enlisted in the rank of sub-Inspector and to permit these officers, in any but very cases, to be superseded by Native Officers of the Indian Army of less education, no better family and probably less service would, I consider, be a grave mistake. From a strictly Police point of view...[these men], for the first two or three years of their service in the Police, would be engaged in trying to learn new duties, their previous training in the Army only acting as a

⁹¹ *The Army in Indian and its Evolution*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta, 1924, p.159

⁹² The scheme was restricted to the directly recruited native commissioned officers and not the men promoted from the ranks. These men were regarded as invariably of 'well educated' background and of good social position. These officers got commissions at a very early age. By the end of the first decade, these men had blocked the promotions of the ranks in the army and this had resulted into a serious dissatisfaction. The only remedy was to remove these men and to place somewhere else, as the Home member said: "they get their commissions at an early age, run to the top of Native Officers' list and block promotions for years unless forced to go on pension; their transfer to the civil branch would be of advantage to all concerned". The Commander-in-Chief, and Army Member of the Viceroy's Council, O'M Creagh regarded it as 'a solution of some of our most difficult political problems'. Along with the repetition of the Home member's words he added: "I welcome the proposal that our Indian officers should be given an opening in the Police and Provincial services...nor I think officers of good family and means would object to starting in subordinate positions and working their way up-commencing on Rs. 250 per mensem. This is more than any young British officer of the Army draws and more than any Indian officer can hope to get in the Army".

handicap in the task".⁹³ In conclusion, the Government of India almost abandoned the scheme and adopted no uniform policy in this regard. Rather it was left to the provinces to decide if they could carry on such appointments in the future.

The supreme government made efforts to establish more control over police and stiffening of the ranks. The introduction of army and ex-army men in the police was undertaken to create a mirror image of army in the form of armed police reserves. It was also an effort to assert supremacy over the civil branches of the government. Accordingly there was a considerable increase in the budget of the Indian police in the wake of the recommendations of the Indian Police Commission. In this decade the expenditure on the police department increased by no less than 68 per cent.⁹⁴

The increase in the expenditure on the police forces had no visible impact on the services conditions of the constabulary. Efforts were made to raise well organised armed forces in the provinces rather than to improve the existing deplorable service conditions of the constabulary. In case of the Punjab, these reforms had insignificant impact on the service conditions. Between 1901 and 1910, the expenditure on the police increased up to 55 per cent in the Punjab⁹⁵. The service conditions still remained deplorable and the salary of a constable least remunerative. The first decade remained more or less in continuity with the previous century. An important index of this was the large number of resignations during this time.

The recruitment for army from the Punjab and low rate of salaries for the constabulary were major hindrances in attracting recruits for the police. According to the Annual Police Reports, epidemics and predominant agrarian nature of Punjab society played an equally

⁹³ In a letter to the Governemnt of Punjab, dated 2 December 1910, see 'Appointment to the Police Department as Inspectors or Deputy Superintendents a small percentage of Native Commissioned Officers of the Regular Army', Home (police), August 1912/83-92, GOI, NAI

⁹⁴ Fuller, *The Empire of India*, 1913, p.312

⁹⁵ It increased from Rs. 34,67,663 in 1901 to Rs. 53,60,725 in 1910. The total strength increased from 20,458 in 1900 to 21, 122 in 1909.

important role, at least for the earlier decades of the twentieth century.⁹⁶ Thus from 1901-1910, plague and other epidemics played a major role in determining the strength of the police force. The large number of deaths of family members of lower ranks at home, created a situation, in which they were forced to support the shortage of labour and manpower. As a result the lower ranks of resigned in large numbers. It was particularly easier for lower ranks to make a choice for agriculture at home for the pay scale of the lower ranks was not higher than lay agricultural labourers. The resignations were particularly high if the year of plague coincided with a year of 'favourable agricultural conditions'. Thus the average number of resignations during the first decade of the twentieth century was around 897, but during the years of plague epidemic they were particularly high. For instance during the years 1904, 1905, 1907 and 1909, the number of resignations were 1016, 1039, 1028 and 1094 respectively. These were the years of plague epidemic in Punjab. In fact, the number of resignations for the first decade of twentieth century varied from 700 in 1902 to 1094 in 1909.

The 'favourable agricultural conditions'⁹⁷ often induced resignations. For instance for the year 1904, which was a year marked by 'favourable agricultural conditions', the number of resignations increased in almost every district, the percentage for the whole force for the year was 5.2 per cent in 1904 as compared to 2.8 in 1903.⁹⁸ Thus for the year 1904, the superintendent of Police of Delhi District remarked that 'the unusual number of resignations

⁹⁶ The role of plague in matters relating to crime and efficiency of the force is discussed below.

⁹⁷ The expression 'favourable agricultural conditions' is repeatedly used in the annual police administration reports. It should not be equated with agriculture with good market returns. The 'favourable agricultural conditions' and 'favourable agriculture' are two different concepts used here. The first was concerned with the process, the second with the outcome. It was the process which was emphasised by the colonial police officials than the outcome.

⁹⁸ *PARP*, 1904, p. 18

was largely due to the death of relatives from plague, and the consequent necessity of men having to go home to attend to their private affairs.⁹⁹

The number of resignations and desertions fell from 1,119 during the year 1905 to 770 in 1906. This was ascribed to the improved pay and prospects of the members of the force. With the introduction of the Rs.11 grade of constables, which had been carried into effect with respect to the year 1907, a further decrease in the number of resignations was looked forward.¹⁰⁰ But, again, in 1907, plague was excessively prevalent not so much among members of the force on duty, but in the villages, with the results that when death had removed those in charge of the family land, their places had to be filled by those doing their work. The number of resignations and desertions rose therefore very considerably, there were 50 more desertions and 231 more resignations in 1907.¹⁰¹

In 1909, with very improved agricultural conditions and abundance of work available, an increase in resignation was to be anticipated. The number rose from 936 in 1908 to 1094 in 1909, the figures being highest in those districts with large towns- Lahore, Amritsar, Rawalpindi-with Delhi as an exception. It was argued that a large number of these resignations were due to the difficulty of obtaining leave when required, and orders were issued for leave to be granted more readily than had hitherto been the custom.¹⁰² This brought good results for 1910, which was again a year of 'favourable agricultural conditions'. It was argued that in a year of great agricultural activity and prosperity resignations were always numerous since the call of the land for labour then compelled the men to seek their homes at any cost. But, the provision of granting leave more freely than previous years, which were

⁹⁹ *PARP*, 1904, pp.18-19

¹⁰⁰ *PARP*, 1906, p. 11

¹⁰¹ *PARP*, 1907,p.15

¹⁰² *PARP*, 1909,p. 23

introduced in 1909, led to a decrease in number of resignations during the year 1910.¹⁰³ As a result, the number of resignations during the year 1910 declined to 936 as compared to previous year's high figure of 1094.¹⁰⁴ After 1910, Constables after enlistment were required to make an undertaking that they will not resign from their appointments until three years elapsed from the date of enlistment.

The Great War and the Police: 1914-1918

During the 1910's and particularly during the World War I and afterwards a large exchange of men between the army and the police of the Punjab took place. Not only the army department but many of the serving men and ex-soldiers were anxious to secure employment in the civil employment for better prospects. Employment with the police was attractive but the terms of the police service and future prospects were not. Till the end of the World War I, the 'thirty years of pension rule' was most repugnant for the army personnel.¹⁰⁵ This rule alone 'drifted away' a large number of men desirous of joining police into ordinary civil life. Those who joined the forces often resigned after a brief period of service for the same reason.¹⁰⁶ However, in the Punjab, the ex-army men were easily available for recruitment in the police.

On 1 February 1916, 6 ex-British and 549 ex-Indian soldiers were serving in the police force of the Punjab. The average length of military service of the former was seven and the latter's four and a half years. The Lieutenant Governor of Punjab was of the opinion that there was no hurdle in recruiting such men in the police force of the province. The Inspector General of Punjab was also of the opinion that there was no difficulty in recruiting

¹⁰³ *PARP*, 1909, pp.23-24

¹⁰⁴ *PARP*, 1910, p. 28

¹⁰⁵ The previous tenure of the army service was not counted for pension and ex-soldiers were considered for pension only after thirty years of service in the police.

¹⁰⁶ 'Proposals to allow *ex*-soldiers (British and Indian) employed in the police to count their previous military service as qualifying for civil pension under certain conditions;', Home (police), March 1917/23-35, GoI, NAI, p.7

such men however the Punjab government also accepted the fact that the 'the existing rules gave rise to considerable hardship in individual cases'.¹⁰⁷ Most of the British provinces were in favour of revising the existing pension rules which were a major hurdle in securing the service of ex-soldiers in the police forces but the Punjab was more or less indifferent: the Punjab had a large supply of ex-soldiers available for recruiting.¹⁰⁸

In the year 1914 as a result of the experience gained between 1902 and 1911, the local Government deputed S.E. Wallace, Deputy Inspector General of Police, to conduct a thorough enquiry into the distribution and organisation of the police force in the province, and on the recommendations of this enquiry, the Government of Punjab sanctioned a reduction in the number of Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Constables and ordered an addition in the number of Head Constables. The rates of the pay for the police were revised and made favourable to the constabulary.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, when the World War I began, a large number of men from the police resigned or volunteered to join the army.

A significant proportion of the police constabulary joined the active army service. The official compiler of the war work in the province gave the following account:

"It is a remarkable testimonial alike to the capacity of the Force [police], and to the loyalty of the Province, that in the middle of 1918 it was possible to contemplate the raising of two Police Battalions, one for general military service and the other for garrison duty in Indian and on the frontier. Volunteers were called for, and before the end of the next month, no less than 3,101 members of the force had come forward, and then enrolled in the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 132nd (Punjab Police) Regiment. The 1st battalion was actually under orders for overseas service when the Armistice was signed".¹¹⁰

In few districts, the proportion of police men joining the army was quite alarming. For instance, not less than a quarter of the total strength of the police force of Gurgaon District volunteered for the Army during the World War I period. For Deputy Commissioner of

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p.9

¹⁰⁸ 'Proposal to allow ex-soldiers (British and Indian) employed in the police to count their previous military service', Home (Police), March 1917/23-35, GOI, NAI, p.2

¹⁰⁹ S.K. Ghosh (ed), *Encyclopaedia of Police in India*, Vol. I, Asish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1993, p.373

¹¹⁰ M.S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1922, p.51

Gurgaon, F.L. Brayne it was, “ an unmistakable proof of their truly martial spirit”.¹¹¹ The drift was not restricted to the lower ranks, the higher officials also took commissions in the army. About 12 Sub-Inspectors received commissions in the 132nd Regiment, 38 Police Officers took military commissions, and 11 non-gazetted police officers were employed as warrant officers in the Supply and Transport Corps.¹¹²

The volunteering from the police to army may or may not have been a marked proof of ‘loyalty’ but the resignations from the police were ‘embarrassing’ for the Punjab Government. The War years saw a large number of resignations by the men from the police. At the beginning of the second decade the number of resignations without pension declined substantially in the police department. The first decade of the twentieth century was notorious for a large number of resignations. In the subsequent years, the number of resignations declined but as the Great War began, the number of resignations again rose substantially. The increase was marked by a decline at the end of the war.

Table 2.7: Resignations in pre-Great War years from 1911-1914

year	Number of resignations	Year	Number of resignations
1911	691	1915	887
1912	592	1916	961
1913	622	1917	725
1914	599	1918	987

Source: *PARP, respective years.*

The volunteering coupled with resignations at two months’ notice remained a major concern of the police department during the War. The average number of resignations between 1915 and 1919 was around 878. The number of resignations varied from one district to another. Significantly, the chief reason for resignations was cited as the ‘enlistment in the

¹¹¹ *Record of War-Work in Gurgaon District* edited by the Deputy Commissioner, Gurgaon, F.L. Brayne, The Scottish Mission Industries Company Limited, Poona, 1923, p.16

¹¹² M.S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1922, p.51

army'. In other words, on the one end provincial government was supplying a considerable number of men from police to army in the form of volunteers, and on the other hand, many policemen resigned on their will to join the army.

In 1916, the number of resignations was 961. The districts owing the largest number of resignations were Hissar, Ambala, Rohtak and Gurgaon in the Easter Range; Amritsar, Lahore, Gujranwala, and Gurdaspur in the Central Range; and Rawalpindi, Shahpur and Jhelum in Western Range. In 1916, while there was large number of resignations in the Gurgaon District (40), it was reported that 'most of the men who resigned enlisted in the Army'.¹¹³ Most of the resignations were concentrated in the Easter Range.

In 1916, apart from resignations there were thirty four desertions. The desertions unlike resignations were a punishable offence under the Police Act of 1861. During 1918, 69 men deserted from the police and it was reported that most of them 'were known to have joined the Army'.¹¹⁴ During the war period, to deal with resignations and to improve the recruitment for the constabulary, the pay scale of the constabulary was increased. As the war ceased, the number of resignations also declined. Apart from the increase in pay, unfavourable agricultural conditions were cited as reason for large scale resignations. As the annual police administration report for the year 1920 mentioned: 'probably to the fact that owing to the prolonged drought no agricultural operations were possible'.¹¹⁵

There was a widespread disaffection at the end of the War. The prices shot up, the employment opportunities for the demobilised soldiers were meagre and there was a widespread political agitation. The British administrators were conscious of the economic grievances among the richer peasantry, as also of the ex-servicemen desire for civil

¹¹³ *PARP*, 1916, p.33

¹¹⁴ *PARP*, 1918, p.13

¹¹⁵ *PARP*, 1920, p.17

employment for themselves and their family members. The circular issued by Michael Edward to regulate the Punjab Public services on 3rd October 1919 laid down that 66 per cent of government services must be enjoyed by the zamindars i.e. statutory agriculturists of the province. In certain departments the reservations was to be even higher than 66 per cent.¹¹⁶

A number of measures were taken to contain the spread of sedition among the soldiers and ex-soldiers. A noteworthy development in the history of the police of the Punjab was the recruitment of a large number of ex-soldiers in the police force. The Punjab Government issued an order on 13 November 1919, whereby preference was given to demobilised soldiers for employment in the various departments of the Government and especially in the Police forces. As Sir John Maynard said: "By virtue of their army training demobilised soldiers are generally well suited for service in the Police Forces, and this in itself is a qualification which in addition to other claims to preferential treatment is being borne in mind by the Police Department..."¹¹⁷ In 1920, 1, 171 men were enlisted in the police force of the province. A special preference was given to the demobilised soldiers: "demobilised military men entering the Police were given concessions in the matter of counting their previous service for increase and pension and were 'coming forward readily'"¹¹⁸

The Inter-War Period: 1919-1939

After the First World War, the policy was to recruit ex-soldiers in the provincial police force. It was a policy of co-option. The ex-soldiers and de-mobilised soldiers after the War were a major problem for the provincial Government. On the other hand, political movements like the Non-cooperation Khilafat movement and Akali movement were also on the rise. The War also caused an economic crisis as a result of which the recruitment of ex-

¹¹⁶ Prem Chowdhary, *Punjab Politics: the role of Sir Chhotu Ram*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1984, pp.49-51

¹¹⁷ *PLCD*, 25 July-10 November 1921, Vol. II, 1921, p.117

¹¹⁸ *PARP*, 1920, p.17

soldiers in the police was a preferred policy. It also helped the police to have 'best recruits' in the force.

In the inter-war period the law and order situation became exceedingly difficult to manage: there were communal riots, nationalist agitation, popular upsurges, and banditry, etc. As J. M. Dunnet said in 1925: "After the end of the last War till the close of the last year a strong wave of crime passed over the country which required almost miraculous strength to oppose it. Desperadoes and criminals from all parts of the world returned to the province. Versed in all the modern tricks of underworld as they were armed with the most dangerous and up-to-date types of weapons that were known to us; and of these they made a free use. Crime rapidly increased, especially that of a very violent nature against person and property. In fact it was quite unparalleled in the recent history of the country..."¹¹⁹

The expenditure on police rapidly increased during this period and later on followed the great economic depression. The provincial government was highly burdened with increasing expenditure on police. The situation was tackled by employing the Additional police which was a temporary force. As most of the law and order problems were of temporary nature it justified the temporary employment of the additional police for such episodes. The transformation of the turbulent circumstances into a peaceful environment also led to the dismemberment of the additional police force. The permanent employment of the police forces would have burdened the provincial treasury. Most of these men were recruited among the demobilised and ex-soldiers who were easily available in the Punjab. The enlistment of ex-soldiers also provided them a good opportunity for employment. With the employment of additional police which was manned by ex-army personnel, the role of army in controlling civil disturbances also declined during this period. The policy of the provincial

¹¹⁹ *PLCD*, 14 March 1925, Vol. VIII, no. 11, 1925, p. 575

government also underwent a change as it now favoured deployment of additional police than to rely on the army. As J. M. Dunnet said in response to a criticism in Legislative Council on 25 November 1924: "What sort of help do you want from cantonment? Do you mean to say that additional police should be dispensed and military be requisitioned in their stead. You can't get free help from the Military authorities. There even you shall have to pay..."¹²⁰

The additional police, an ex-army police, was employed invariably on duties of military nature such as patrolling, breaking up the gangs of dacoits, following the terrorists, and rebels, etc. They were deployed primarily on such tasks and were not employed on the routinized departmental works, such as investigation or detective work. In 1921, one lakh rupees was sanctioned for additional police force of the province. In this force 'all the men with very few exceptions were 'demobilised soldiers'.¹²¹ A special force consisting of around fifty persons was sanctioned in February 1926, for a period of six months, to break up the notorious gangs of Shahaboo and Kammun in the Central Punjab.¹²² During the inter-war period the number of ex-army police significantly increased.

The inter-war period was also the period of vast improvement in the service conditions. There was a steep fall in the number of resignations: from 987 in 1918 to 473 in 1921. The decrease in the number of resignations was attributed to the increase of pay granted to the rank and file of the force and also probably to famine conditions.¹²³ The average number of resignations during 1930's was around 560 resignations per year. But the depression period was particularly important in the history of the Punjab Police in the early twentieth century. For it was only in this period that the desired recruits were easily available without any trouble. On the other hand resignations declined during this period till the

¹²⁰ *PLCD*, 4 August 1924-25 November 1924, Lahore, 1924, Vol. n.d., p. 767

¹²¹ *PLAD*, 25 July to 10 November, Vol. II, 1921, Government Printing Press, Lahore, p. 117

¹²² *PARP*, 1926, p. 21

¹²³ *PARP*, 1921, p.18

beginning of World War II in 1939, which again altered the situation. As a result, the average number of resignations from 1931 to 1939 were 128, but with the beginning of the war the number rose again to 219 for the year 1940. As a result 1930's stand in a stark contrast to the earlier decades. The prices were low and there was no other employment easily available. The World War II again opened the gates for recruitment in favourite employment of Punjabis, the Army. As a result lower ranks again resigned from Police employment and joined the Army.

Although the pay scale of police was revised from time to time, it remained insufficient to keep men contented with their salaries or it failed to attract the desired recruits towards police employment. The Annual Police Administration Report for the year 1928 remarked that even with substantial increase in pay over time, the salary of Rs 17 per mensem was still inadequate for the constables. It was argued that the average mess bill of a constable was not less than Rs.8 per mensem. This left him with only Rs.9 with which he was supposed to clothe and feed his family and provide himself with plain clothes and luxuries, however humble these may be.¹²⁴

From the quinquennial reports on the regular wages survey of the Punjab it was estimated that in Lahore general unskilled labour in 1912 was paid for at 3 annas to 8 annas a day-Rs.11-4-0 to Rs.15 per mensem, while the police constable got Rs 10 to Rs. 13 per mensem. From 1922 to 1927, the labour rates were 14 annas to Rs.1 per day or Rs.26-4-0 to Rs.30 per mensem. In 1931 the rates were 10 annas to 12 annas for Rs. 18-12-0 to Rs.22-8-0 per mensem against the Foot constables Rs.17 to Rs. 20. In fact, in most cases unskilled

¹²⁴ *PARP*, 1928, p. 13

labourer earned more than a police constable's pay and *even convicts and inmates of Criminal Tribes Settlements could earn at time more pay per day than the constables.*¹²⁵

In the 1930's resignations declined but not due to enhanced pay prospects but because the employment prospects in other sectors were meagre. As a result, the resignations declined only when there were no other alternatives left during the depression years of 1930's. However the salary remained low throughout the first half of the twentieth century. It need to be kept in mind, as the annual police administration report for the year 1934 mentioned: "Even in these days of depression, however, the wages of a builder's coolly at Lahore are equal to the pay of a constable"¹²⁶ When in 1931 the Great Depression reached India, the only official salaries which did not suffer a ten per cent cut were those of ordinary policemen. Since concurrently there was a price fall, this actually amounted to a wage rise.¹²⁷ Particular care was taken of men posted in urban areas for the job in urban areas was often arduous. Special allowances were paid to compensate expenditure on living in Lahore to all the police officers starting from Senior Superintendents to all Head Constables and Constables.¹²⁸

In November 1925, the Punjab Police Committee was appointed to examine the questions of the adequacy of the present force and of means of improving its efficiency and integrity.¹²⁹ Also called Lumsdon Committee, the recommendations of the committee remained a basis of the strength of the police force even a decade after independence.¹³⁰ The pay prospects of the constabulary were revised. Another important initiative was the introduction of the new ranks such as that of Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police.

¹²⁵ 'Supply of the India Office of Information regarding Police in India', Home(Police), File.58/VIII/31, NAI, GOI, 1931, p.84

¹²⁶ *PARP*, 1934

¹²⁷ D.A. Low(ed), *Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle 1917-47*, Arnold Heinemann, London, 1977. P.4

¹²⁸ *PLCD*. Vol. XI, Appendix, Lahore, 1928, p.1247

¹²⁹ *PLCD*, 1925, p.17

¹³⁰ *Report on Police Administration in the Punjab for the year ending 31 December 1956*, Government Printing Press, Chadigarh, 1962, p.49. In 1926, an important initiative was the setting up of a police training school for lower ranks in the Sialkot District.

To keep men satisfied and to attract new recruits, the Punjab Government increased the prospects for promotion. It was believed that the quick promotions to upper subordinates from lower ranks would keep the lower ranks satisfied. A part of this strategy was to introduce new ranks. For instance, on the recommendations of Punjab Police Provincial Police Committee (1926) in the year 1928, a Selection Grade of Constables with pay rising from Rs.20 to Rs.28 and a new rank of Assistant Sub Inspector with scale of pay of Rs.45-1-60 were introduced with effect from 1 April 1928. Moreover, free issue of uniform and equipment to Assistant Sub Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, and Inspectors of Police was sanctioned during the year 1928.¹³¹ The creation of the rank of Assistant Sub Inspector was instrumental in containing the grievances and complaints of lower ranks.

It was argued that under the revised rules it was possible for a Constable with the necessary qualifications to earn promotion to the Selection Grade within 6 months of his enrolment. In fact it was argued that provided he continued to do well, there was no reason why a man of exceptional promise should not officiate in the rank of Assistant Sub-Inspector after about 5 years' total service and secure substantive promotion to the rank of Sub-Inspector within 10 years of enrolment.¹³²

¹³¹ *PARP*, 1928, p.13, also interestingly the Carbon Copy as a technique was introduced in the Punjab Police for the first time in 1928, it led to a significant decrease in the workload of force.

¹³² *PARP*, 1934, p.20

TABLE 2.8: Composition of Police-Officers and Men from 1921-1944

Year	Total Actual Strength		TOTAL	Percentage of Officers of total	Percentage of men of total	No of Subordinate Officers (Inspectors+SI+ ASI after 1927)	Higher Officials (all ranks above Inspector)
	Officers	Men					
1921	992	18651	19643	5.05	94.94	893	99
1925	1004	19869	20873	4.8	95.18	879	125
1926	1005	19899	20904	4.8	95.19	878	127
1927	1010	19922	20932	5.5	95.17	888	122
1928	1154	20642	21796	5.29	94.70	1029	125
1930	1347	21324	22671	5.94	94.05	1239	108
1932	1331	21155	22486	5.91	94.08	1225	106
1933	1,352	20925	22,277	6.06	93.93	1241	111
1935	1393	20925	22318	6.24	93.75	1286	107
1936	1464	20776	22240	6.58	93.41	1357	107
1937	1505	20858	22363	6.72	93.27	1399	106
1939	1611	20824	22435	7.18	92.81	1495	116
1940	2024	23697	25721	7.86	92.13	1909	115
1943	1822	22158	23980	7.59	92.40	1682	126
1944	2128	23406	25534	8.34	91.66	2021	107

Source: From the respective annual police administration reports of the Punjab.

The proportion of officers ranks in the Punjab Police increased over time while the proportion of lower ranks declined. For instance, the proportion of officer ranks increased from 5.5 of the total strength in 1927 to 6.24 in 1935. In fact the proportion of officer ranks rose further and they constituted 8.34 in 1944. But actual increase in proportion was occurring at the level of upper subordinates only. For instance the number of upper subordinates rose from 893 in 1921 to 1029 in 1928 and further from 1241 in 1933 to 1495 in 1939. In fact in 1944 their number was 2021. On the other hand the number of higher ranks declined from 125 in 1925 to 106 in 1932, in fact number further declined to 106 in 1937. It was only with the beginning of War that their number again raised to 116 in 1939 and to 126 in 1943. Thus a broad pattern is visible over the depression years. While, the number of higher officials declined in 1930's till the beginning of World War II, the number of upper subordinates kept on increasing. Hence, the overall increase in the officer ranks. This increase in the number of upper subordinates resulted due to the fact that number of promotions from lower ranks to upper subordinates kept on increasing, due to revised scale of promotions. It

was a major effort on the part of the Government to check the discontent among the lower ranks.

World War II: 1939-46

During the World War II, there was a tremendous increase in the expenditure of the police. In 1941-42, the expenditure of the police in the Punjab was almost ten per cent (9.87 per cent) of the total revenue of the province. By the end of the War, it had significantly increased. In 1945-46, it was 11.2 per cent of the provincial revenue.¹³³ The war time exigency, in the Punjab, also led to the raising of a large body of Civic Guards almost 21,000 guards by June 1941 with an annual cost of 6.5 lakhs. These Civic Guards were unarmed body of men and relieved regular police from the burdensome war time duties.¹³⁴

Along with the War, there was a big spurt in crime. During 1939-40, the law and order conditions in the Western and Eastern Districts of the province were very disturbed: in the Western Districts due to depredations by the tribal raiders and in the Eastern Districts by the activities of the local dacoits and murderers. In order to check such disturbances, a large number of men were temporarily raised as both mounted and foot police for operations in these districts.¹³⁵

The ex-soldiers were in a great demand during World War II. It was reported that even the ex-servicemen over the age of 35 were not easily found. There was a widespread shortage of 'desired' recruits in the Punjab. The problem was also experienced by the Delhi police, which mostly recruited only from the Punjab. The annual report of the Delhi

¹³³ The total expenditure was 289 lakhs in 1945-46 and the total revenue of the province of the Punjab in the same period was 25.87 crores. The situation was worst in other provinces, in the same period, NWFP (40 %), Orissa (18%), Bengal (15%), Bihar (14%), United Provinces (13.6 %). See 'central contribution towards the Provincial Police after 31st March 1946', Home (Police), 174/11/46, GOI, NAI, p.5

¹³⁴ 'Question of increasing the strength of the regular police force', Home(police), 174/14/40, 1940, GOI, NAI, p.66

¹³⁵ *ibid*, p.63

province, mentions that a considerable difficulty was experienced towards the end of the 1940 in 'securing adequate recruits of the right type'. The report explains the shortage of recruits, as, "doubtless owing to the demands of the army and Punjab Provincial Additional Police. The Reserve Inspectors has recently been despatched on a recruiting tour in the Punjab, and it is hoped that this will prove successful. Although conditions of service in Delhi are very favourable, urban duties are unpopular owing to their monotony and arduousness, and the average Punjab villager not unnaturally prefers to serve in the normal rural districts, where the conditions of work and the manner of living are more familiar."¹³⁶

During the inter-war period, the Punjab Government had relied on ex-soldiers for its ranks. But this policy became a crisis during the World War II, as a large number of these ex-army police resigned from the police to re-join the army. In the 'turbulent' 1940's it was a major setback for the police.

The Defence Co-ordination Department of the Government of India, in a circular dated 31 October 1939, recognised the value of military service but held the internal situation as of supreme importance: "... the services of civil officers in the posts for which they have been selected and trained are likely to be of no less ultimate national value than those which they may render as military officers, the maintenance of the civil administration is of primary importance...as a general rule, civil officers should not at present be allowed to undertake military duties in view of the certain increase in the volume and difficulty of the duties which will fall to be performed by them in their ordinary posts both during and at the end of the war."¹³⁷

¹³⁶ 'Report and Review of the Police Administration in the Delhi province for the year 1940', Home (police), 74/14/41, 1941, NAI, GOI, p.65

¹³⁷ 'Question of taking power to make rules to prevent resignations from the Police', Home (Police), 174/19/39, 1939, p.12

The whole police establishment from, the bottom to top, was under serious threat due to War time recruitment. A large number of constables resigned and applied for the corresponding ranks in the army. On the other end, the large number of police officers, particularly the Upper Subordinates and higher ranks, in British India applied for the Commissioned ranks in the Army. The War induced a large scale potential drift of men from the police to army. It was a sever challenge for the Government of India to contain such developments during the War.

During the World War II, the recruitment of ex-soldiers by police officers at an extensive scale was resented by the Army Department. According the Army Department, it was alleged that in most of the cases even concerned Army Recruiting Officers of the areas, were not consulted. This seriously prejudiced consequent army recruitment from 'this source' in a given area and thereby affected the recruiting plans. In October 1939, the Government of India decreed that the recruitment of ex-soldiers in Police must be co-ordinated by Army Headquarters, and 'with the ex-soldiers market growing gradually weaker this was more than ever necessary'. In spite of this general directive by the Government of India, the provincial police probably ignored all prohibitions and kept on recruiting the ex-soldiers in the police force of the province. In July 1940, the recruiting officer of the Rawalpindi complained that extensive recruitment for the provincial police was being carried out in his area.¹³⁸

The recruitment of ex-soldiers by the police seriously dis-located the army recruitment strategy. In practice, a Recruiting Officer maintained a register of ex-soldiers of an area particularly of those who were 'suitable and available for re-employment'. The Recruiting Officer could find out men from this register as and when a need arose. But during the World War II, the police authorities indulged into direct recruitment of ex-soldiers without any consultation with the army authorities. It resulted into a crisis for the army

¹³⁸ 'Enlistment of members of the police force in the army' Home(police), 1940/174/2/40, GOI, NAI, p.7

recruitment plans for the Recruiting Officers were not aware regarding the 'correct position as regards the resources of ex-soldiers' in their areas.¹³⁹

Most of the ex-soldiers recruited in the police force, when addressed by the Recruiting Officers for re-employment in the army, abandoned the police and appeared before the Recruiting Officers for re-employment. It created a crisis for the police force of the province during the World War II period. The matter was taken up with the Army Department and strict instruction were issued to Army Recruiting Officers to avoid such men: "they will on no account enrol into the Army any member of the Police force of a province without first obtaining from the Police authorities concerned a written certificate that the applicant has been permitted to resign from the police...the person concerned should be informed that if his intention is to enlist for military service, he will not be accepted for such service and that resignations will, in consequence only result in the loss of his employment."¹⁴⁰ In spite of all these instructions, several complaints were received regarding the recruitment of the policemen into the army. In fact, the recruitment of police continued throughout Second World War. In 1942, the recruitment of ex-army police was completely banned and it was strongly worded that no military recruitment officer should approach ex-army policemen with views to joining or rejoining the army and a 'disciplinary action was assured against any officer or other ranks of the army who disregarded this order'.¹⁴¹

A large number of ex-army policemen kept on approaching the Recruiting Officers. It was again and again instructed to the Recruiting Officers that such men should not be enlisted in the Army. Subsequently, it was directed that while addressing the ex-soldiers for re-

¹³⁹ *ibid*, p.8

¹⁴⁰ 'Question of taking power to make rules to prevent resignations from police', Home (police) 174/19/39, 1939, GOI, NAI, p.5

¹⁴¹ 'Enlistment of members of the police force in the army' Home(police), 1940/174/2/40, GOI, NAI, p.30

employment in the army, it should be explicitly mentioned that, "if already employed, ignore it".¹⁴²

The question of the resignations from the police during a major war was taken up by the Government of India, at an all-India level in 1937. The issue was also discussed at the Police Officers Conference in 1936 which took into account the past records.¹⁴³ A large scale resignations had taken place during the World War I period. According to the existing rules, a police officer could resign on giving two months' notice, where after he was bound to be released from his service. In this manner a large number of resignations had occurred during the World War I period.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, there was anticipation that large scale resignations from the police will take place as it happened during the Great War. However, the Government of India, also recognised the fact that the situations were not analogous and there would be no widespread resignations in the police forces as it happened during the Great War. It was argued, for instance that during the inter-war period the considerable improvement had occurred in the conditions of the police service. Between the Great War and World War II there was a considerable disparity in terms of service conditions and pay prospects for the police. At the beginning of the World War II, therefore, no such crisis was expected as it took place during the World War I.

However, the situation had considerably deteriorated with the progress of the war. By December 1941, the Punjab government was particularly worried about the plight of the Additional Police force of the province, but the condition of the regular police was stated to be much more satisfactory:

¹⁴² *ibid*, p.8

¹⁴³ 'Question of taking power to make rules to prevent resignations from the Poliec', Home (Police), 174/19/39, 1939, GOI, NAI, pp.1-2

“ the position in the regular police is not causing any grave anxiety at the moment because this provided a permanent career, but in the temporary forces like the provincial Additional Police there is considerable likelihood that resignations may be put in large numbers and it is absolutely necessary to take immediate steps to prevent their ranks being depleted in this way”¹⁴⁴

By March 1942, the language of the provincial government had significantly changed and confidence had waned:

“...this question is of great urgency in the Punjab and calls for the earliest positive remedy. The position, as a result of these resignations, is already serious in the Provincial Additional Police and there are signs that it may become at least embarrassing even in the regular police...”¹⁴⁵

The situation was ‘embarrassing’ for the provincial police force but the nature of such resignations was not much clear. Firstly, it was argued, ‘the fact that other members of the policemen’s family had joined the Army and had gone overseas, and left him to look after the family and land’. Secondly, it was alleged that the ex-army police officers were lured by Officers Commanding Units to act as Instructors. It was recognised that a direct approach to a serving police officer from his old regiment, particularly when it was coupled with the promises of promotion, had a most unsettling effect. The situation was particularly serious in case of the provincial additional police for there was no guarantee of continuance of service after the war.¹⁴⁶

In this way both army and police were struggling to tap the ex-soldiers market. The police was restrained from recruiting ex-soldiers during the war. The orders remained in operation even after the end of the World War II. At the cessation of the hostilities, the Senior Superintendent of Police, Delhi received numerous applications from the recruiting officers for the enlistment of available military men.¹⁴⁷ However such recruitment was not possible without the invariable approval of the Army Headquarters in each case. It was only after

¹⁴⁴ ‘The Police (Resignation of Office) Ordinance, Ordinance XI of 1942, Home (Police), 174/1/43, 1943, GOI, NAI, p. 1

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 7

¹⁴⁶ ‘The Police (Resignation of Office) Ordinance, Ordinance XI of 1942, Home (Police), 174/1/43, 1943, GOI, NAI, pp. 7-8

¹⁴⁷ During the colonial times, majority of the recruits for the Delhi police came from the province of the Punjab.

careful scrutinizing, the army withdrew this order. As a result the war time previous approval of the military authorities was no more required.

At the time of partition, the majority of the police left for the West Punjab. The police of the United Punjab was 67 per cent Muslim. In East Punjab, immediate steps were taken to fulfil the strength of police. The precedent was repeated and a large number of new recruits were ex-soldiers.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

In the early twentieth century, new considerations started shaping history of the police force in the Punjab. The martial race theory had a significant impact on the structure and composition of the force. The recruitment strategy for the police became more selective. Apart from the ideological factors, the economic factors like the agrarian conditions of the Punjab played an important role in determining the character of the force. The socio-economic factors led to the preponderance of Muslim in the police force. The police and army developed a unique relationship in colonial Punjab. The line between the two was very thin; as a result, there were frequent exchanges of men and ideas between the two colonial forces. The men serving in the police force of the Punjab could easily be placed in the army as the men serving in the army and ex-soldiers could be placed in the police department of the province. The Additional Police force was only an ex-army police force raised to deal with temporary law and order challenges.

During the World War II period both army and police were in competition with each other to tap the ex-soldiers market. However, the service conditions of the constabulary remained poor throughout this period. The resignations and desertions remained a never

¹⁴⁸ *PARP*, 1948, p.3

ending problem of the police. During the colonial rule, the police had never dealt with a major law and order. The police was adequate to deal with routine tasks. However, when the partition catastrophe occurred, the police failed miserably to contain the violence. In fact police itself participated into the partition violence. The role of the police in the partition violence requires a scrutiny.

Chapter III

Police, Partition, and Communalism

"I am pained to hear that the recent selections of Assistant Sub Inspector candidates have been so unfavourable to the Hindu agriculturists of the Ambala division...I was just putting into an envelop a note to the Premier complaining of the inadequate representation of Hindus in general and Hindu zamindars in particulars in various grades of police service along with another note relating to the Education Department and the case of four jat young men...I do not know whether anything will result from these notes, particularly in the Police Department which has very special rules of its own which only the Governor can alter."

Sir Chhotu Ram to Hardwari Lal, on 2 March 1941, Lahore¹

"...No one throws, a glance towards the condition of a forsaken district like Mianwali, where the Deputy Commissioner, the District and Sessions Judge, the Superintendent of Police, the District Engineer, the heads of all the departments, except the Civil Surgeon (who happens to be a European) are all Mohameddans; where the S.D.O, the D.S.P and all the Tahsildars are Mohamedans; where none of the Inspectors of Police is a Hindu. The Sub-Inspector, or the clerks and the officials need not be enumerated...It is, indeed, painful to have to say as much, but I have done so as all hopes of a change for the better have been lost..."²

A 'sufferer' to the Editor of the Tribune (Lahore) on 1 April 1927

Communalism remains the most dominant theme in the historiography of the partition violence in the Punjab. The same set of arguments, the same facts and figures, and same biases return again and again in the partition historiography. The contemporaries were prisoners of their time, but the same biases taint the history writing of partition violence even in the twenty first century. The complacent role of police during the partition violence is an argument which has been consistently presented for last more than half a century. The complacent role of police is need not be denied but the argument is framed in a way it that requires a scrutiny.

¹ Rao Bahadur Chhotu Ram was a prominent leader of the Unionist Party of the Punjab. He represented Hindu Jats' interest from Rohtak district of South-eastern Punjab. Hardwari Lal was Tehsildar on special duty in Jullundur. See Prem Chowdhry, *Punjab Politics: the role of Sir Chhotu Ram*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1984, Appendix VI, p.345. The 'Zamindar' word in the Punjab was used for any one owning land and a hereditary agriculturist.

² *The Tribune*, Lahore, April 1, 1927, p.8

The earliest accounts were designed to 'displace blame' for the onset of violence to the 'other' community by documenting, albeit one-sidedly, the events surrounding partition.³ The Government of West Punjab produced a series of reports in 1948-49 designed to show evidence of a Sikh 'Plan' to ethnically cleanse Muslims from the East Punjab. These included studies of para-military communal formations such as the *Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh*.⁴ On the Indian side, G.D. Khosla's study *Stern Reckoning* exemplifies mirror the trend. It was based on the researches of the Fact Finding Commission of the Government of India's Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation. The Commission collected statements of refugees' maltreatment to counterbalance Pakistani charges of genocide in East Punjab. The need to 'blame' rivals has resulted in diametrically opposed accounts in such riot torn cities as Amritsar.⁵

On the Indian side, after the partition, the blame was placed on Muslim policemen. Contemporaries such as G. D. Khosla, members of Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, other officials, and victims in their testimonies, believed that police, a major agent of control, was not only ineffective during the partition months but was also partisan in character and often indulged into violence against non-Muslims.⁶ They believed that a major reason for the communal control of police was the preponderance of Muslims in the constabulary ranks. It was argued that the Muslims around the time of partition constituted more than 70 per cent of the police in the province of the Punjab and this resulted into

³ Ian Talbot & Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p.63

⁴ Government of West Punjab, *The Sikhs in Action*, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1948, Government of West Punjab, *Notes on the Sikh Plan*, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1948, Government of West Pakistan, *RSSS in Punjab*, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1948

⁵ Ian Talbot & Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India*, p.63, Also G.D.Khosla, an eyewitness of partition violence, time and again describes partisan role played by police in many incidents. For a large number of individual cases see G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A survey of events leading up to and following the partition of India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1989

⁶ A report published by Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee immediately after partition alleged in many cases Muslim mob, police, and military attacked the non-Muslims. Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, *Muslim League attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab: 1947*, Amritsar, SGPC, 1950, p. 374-444

partisan role of the police.⁷ About half a century later, Dr. Swarna Aiyar in her unpublished Ph.d thesis submitted in Cambridge University in 1994 re-emphasised the role of police in escalating the partition violence. Dr. Aiyar believed that the preponderance of Muslims in the constabulary ranks was a major factor responsible for the communal character of the police. In other words, for Dr. Aiyar the preponderance of Muslims was a major hurdle in the policing during partition violence. Others, like Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh in their recent study, are in agreement with Aiyar's thesis. However, they later add that Hindu policemen were equally culpable in East Punjab!⁸

On both sides police directly participated in partition violence. In Lahore, Jenkins admitted that on 11 and 12 August of 1947, police showed open indiscipline. They made little attempt to enforce the curfew which was imposed on 11 August and policemen actually took part in looting houses. About fifteen Sikhs were killed in a Gurudwara in Lahore city on 11 August, and the Inspector General reported that policemen had almost certainly connived at, if they did not actually carry out this massacre.⁹ A very disturbing feature in Lahore was practical defection of the police, most of whom were Muslim. The evidence showed the police joined mobs, carried out arson, and murdered. All European officers left the Lahore police force on 14 August in accordance with the prior policy. The general morale and discipline of the police force was extremely low.¹⁰ It was alleged that at many places, non-Muslim policemen serving in the Western Punjab were targeted by their Muslim comrades:

⁷ By 1947 Muslims composed a major part of constabulary. In the partition year, Muslims formed 74.1 per cent of the regular police force and 78.2 per cent of the Additional police force in Punjab and this was an uncomfortably large proportion for both Hindus and Sikhs. In the Ambala Range, out of a total of 3,695 Constables 1,861 were Muslims (51 per cent); in the Jullundur Range, Muslims made up 2119 (63 per cent) out of a total of 3368 police constables; while in the Lahore Range, 5,403 (75 per cent) out of 7,205 constables were Muslims.

⁸ Ian Talbot & Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India*, pp.86-88

⁹ Jenkins to Mountbatten, August 13th 1947, No.130, in Lionel Carter (ed), *Punjab Politics, 1 June-14 August 1947: Tragedy*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2007, p.230

¹⁰ "Informal Minutes of the Joint Defence Council Meeting on 16 August 1947", Kirpal Singh(ed), *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab: 1947*, National Book Shop, Delhi, 1991, p.490

“...most alarming to the people, was the disarming of the Sikh and Hindu police at Sheikhpura from Sub-Inspector down to constables. All of them were asked to deposit their arms in the Civil Lines Police Station and to quit the Police Lines. God only knows their fate...”.¹¹

The role of police in the East Punjab was equally culpable. In Amritsar city there had been high casualties mostly among the Muslims. These were largely the result of emasculation of the police force in the city. Muslim policemen in Amritsar District were disarmed on the verbal instructions of a newly appointed Mr. A.K. Kaul, Superintendent of Police Designate.¹² He reduced ‘at a stroke the strength of his force in the city about two thirds’ without any consultation with the higher authorities. Muslim police was withdrawn from rural areas as well. As a result of which there was a precarious presence of police in Amritsar district. Infuriated Jenkins immediately suspended Mr. Kaul, on this account, though the damage done to the morale of the police in the district was irrecoverable. Jenkins was weary of Mr. Kaul, on other grounds as well. The officer concerned allegedly armed some ex-soldiers, including ex-INA men, in plain clothes, as substitutes for the men he had withdrawn. Several of the discontented Muslim policemen made their way to Lahore Police Lines and created problem there.¹³ The Hindu policemen and administrators were culpable in many other episodes in East Punjab as well. The ring leaders of the attacks in Sonapat included couple of honorary magistrates and the Sub-Inspector of the police. A similar help was provided by the Sub-Inspector of police in organising attacks on Muslims at Jagraon in Ludhana District. Similarly Hindu and Sikh policemen led by a Sub-Inspector joined in an

¹¹ G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p.129, also see Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, *Muslim League attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab: 1947*, SGPC, Amritsar, 1950, p.275

¹² Bhagwan Singh Danewallia, *Police and Politics in 20th Century Punjab*, Ajanta Publications, New Delhi, 1997, p.122

¹³ Jenkins to Mountbatten (Telegram), August 12, 1947, NO. 127 and also No.130, in Lionel Carter (ed), *Punjab Politics, 1 June-14 August 1947: Tragedy*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2007, p.226-29

assault on the Muslims of Hansi in the Hissar district that claimed 300 lives.¹⁴ In East Punjab, in many cases police, along with army men attacked Muslims and aided the non-Muslims in perpetrating violence on Muslims.¹⁵ The situation in the East Punjab was also aggravated due to the migration of the Muslim police to the Western Punjab. The Police in the United Punjab had about seventy per cent Muslims. After 15 August the Government of East Punjab found them depleted of more than half of the available police force.¹⁶ In East Punjab, against a total strength of 20,672 in pre-partition days in the United Punjab, after partition the police were left with only 7,185 'effectives'.¹⁷ The entire police force had to be recruited anew in East Punjab and these policemen were recruited from the refugees who were affected by communal riots.¹⁸

In this way both Muslim and non-Muslim police men aided and participated in communal violence. Both Muslim and non-Muslim police can be held responsible for participating in communal violence during the partition. However, in the partition historiography only the Muslim are held responsible. In brief, the 'seventy per cent Muslim' in the police force is posed as a problem rather than a fact. The Muslim majority in the police force of the united Punjab remains an unsettling fact for the partition historians.

The partition historiography has failed to understand the complexity of the situation. In reality there were two issues involved. Firstly, the majority of the police in the pre-partition was Muslim. The Muslim majority character of the police was an administrative question. The police in the Punjab had been a Muslim majority force ever since 1861. Second, the majority of the police or the character of the police force of the Punjab was

¹⁴ Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India*, p.87

¹⁵ See Pushpinder Singh Chopra, *1947: A Soldier's Story, from the Records of Major General Mohinder Singh Chopra*, Military Studies Convention, New Delhi, 1997

¹⁶ G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p.278

¹⁷ Swarna Aiyar, *Violence and the State in the Partition of Punjab: 1947-48*, unpublished Ph.d Thesis, King's College, University of Cambridge, 1994, pp.194-95

¹⁸ Kirpal Singh(ed), *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab: 1947*, National Book Shop, Delhi, 1991, p.738

communal. But the communal character of the police was a wider development and part of larger process of the overall communalisation of society. The Hindu communal leaders, in pre-partition days, attacked the police for its Muslim majority character. According to Hindu communal leaders the non-Muslim were maltreated by the police due to its Muslim majority character. The argument was advanced to secure more jobs for the Hindus and Sikhs in the police department. When partition took place, this argument was again repeated by the non-Muslim masses and leaders. The partition historians uncritically re-stated this argument in their works. They did a disservice to history by equating 'Muslim majority' with 'communal character' of the police department. Therefore the argument of the Hindu communalists remains alive in the partition historiography. This bias requires a corrective.

The Recruitment and Composition

During the colonial rule, the majority of the constabulary in the Punjab was Muslim. The Muslim majority in the constabulary was a result of socio-economic reasons. However it remains difficult to hold the British, Muslims or non-Muslims responsible for the preponderance of Muslims in the constabulary. The preponderance of Muslims was an outcome of much more complex forces chiefly economic and ideological.

The Muslims in the Punjab were comparatively backward than Hindus and Sikhs.¹⁹ By early twentieth century, they constituted 54 per cent of the population of the Punjab. The majority of the Muslim population lived in rural areas. The majority of the Muslim population was concentrated in the north-western districts of the Punjab. In the districts of Gujrat, Jhelum, and Attock, the 95 per cent of the Muslim population was engaged in

¹⁹ K.L. Tuteja & O.P. Grewal, "Emergence of Hindu Communalism in Early Twentieth Century Punjab", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 20. No. 7-8. July August 1992, p.8

agriculture. In the western districts, majority of the Muslim population were either small peasants or tenants. The Muslim living in cities mostly worked as artisans. The Muslims were educationally backward primarily due to their poverty.²⁰

During, the most of the colonial period, the salary of a constable remained very low.²¹ Secondly most of the constabulary was illiterate. No specific education background was essential to secure a constable's job. Therefore, educationally and economically backward Muslim population of the province accepted the police employment more willingly than their Hindu counterparts. Hindus were educationally and economically a dominant religious community.²² They had other options for employment.

A brief, description of the actual recruitment strategy will help us understanding the religious composition of the police. In the pre-partition Punjab, the recruitment was done by the District Superintendents of the Police mostly in their own districts. The minimum physical standards were five feet seven inches height and thirty three inches chest measurement in the age group of twenty to twenty five.²³ Invariably the men of the 'best' castes were recruited with a natural preference for educated men.²⁴ In addition, there were direct appointments for the ranks of Sergeants and Deputy Inspectors from the 'men of good family and education' by the Deputy Inspector General and Inspector General of Police.²⁵

For the recruitment of police, the 'agriculture' and 'army' were two major rivals. On the recommendations of the Indian Police Commission of 1860, the pay scale of constable was decided equal to the average-ordinary wages of unskilled labour. In 1862 the rate of pay

²⁰ K.L. Tuteja & O.P. Grewal, "Emergence of Hindu Communalism in Early Twentieth Century Punjab", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 20. No. 7-8. July August 1992, p.8

²¹ See chapter I and II.

²² See sections below.

²³ *Gazetteer of Muzaffargarh District, 1929*, Lahore, 1930, reprint Sang-e-meel publications, Lahore, 1990, p.286

²⁴ *Indian Police Commission (Punjab Papers)*, Vol. I, 1902, NAI, p.8

²⁵ *ibid*, p.8

of Constable was Rs. 6 and Rs. 7. Between 1862 and 1900, the pay of the wages of the unskilled labour significantly increased but there was no similar increase in the pay scale of constabulary. Similarly, in 1862, the pay of a police constable and that of a native soldier were almost equal.²⁶ In the following decades, the pay of a constable remained stagnant while that of a sepoy became much more lucrative. The poor pay scale was a major hurdle in securing men of 'right stamp' for the police in comparison to army.

The recruitment was mostly done, as a rule, in the District in which the men served or in the neighbouring districts. The recruitment was most satisfactory in the North-Western districts of the province. In contrast, the recruits were not readily available in the Central and South-Eastern Punjab. The availability of recruits was directly linked to the performance of agriculture in an area.²⁷ The districts of Jhelum, Gujarat, Mianwali, Attock, and Rawalpindi in north-western Punjab provided most of the recruits. In these districts land was less fertile and arid. The irrigation was poor and agriculture mostly relied on unreliable monsoon rains. Crops often failed to mature. Therefore the supply of recruits was most reliable in these districts. The majority of the population of these districts were Muslim as a result the Muslims were always in a majority in the police ranks. For instance, in Gujarat District, in 1920's, the force was mainly composed of Muslim agriculturists of various tribes with Gujars predominating. About ten per cent of the force was Hindu and five per cent Sikhs.²⁸ In spite of the small presence of Hindus and Sikhs in the force it was reported that there was no difficulty in getting the right stamp of recruits: "there is no difficulty in getting the right

²⁶ *Report of the Committee Appointed by Government to consider certain questions connected with the Police Administration of the Punjab*, Lahore, November 1899 to February 1900, The Punjab Government Press, Lahore, 1900, p.26

²⁷ The same pattern is noticed by David Omissi in case of army recruitment. He writes, "In the Punjab, for instance, the better-off cultivators of Lahore, Lyallpur, and Gujranwala districts usually provided far fewer soldiers than those who tilled poor soils or small farms in Rawalpindi, Jhelum or Kangra". See David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, Macmillan, London, 1994, p.52

²⁸ *Gazetteer of Gujrat District, 1921*, Lahore, 1921, reprint Sang-e-meel publications, Lahore, 1990, p.151

stamp of recruits; in fact men were turned away even during the War [World War I] in spite of the drain caused by the army”.²⁹

In contrast, in the districts of the South-eastern Punjab, the recruits were not easily found. The recruitment in the Hindu majority districts of south-eastern Punjab such as Ambala, Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, and Karnal was often unsatisfactory. Many a times, recruits were often recruited from north-western districts of the Punjab and even the neighbouring North Western Provinces (later on United Provinces). By 1932, 80 per cent of the constabulary in Ambala District was recruited from outside the district and majority was Muslim. One Kanwar Mamraj Singh Chohan carefully avoiding communal prejudice said in the legislative council in May 1932: “Fortunately in that district [Ambala] the Hindu and Muslim Rajputs are the descendents of the same progenitor. There is no Hindu-Muslim question in the district. I therefore do not raise the communal question, for I consider it to be below my dignity. But it is most regrettable that Shahpur or Jhelum people should be recruited in the district as police constables...”.³⁰ As a result, the Muslims dominated at the level of constabulary, Head constables, and Sub-Inspectors in the Hindu majority districts of south-eastern Punjab.³¹ The Hindus were readily available only in those districts where the opportunities for alternative employment were meagre. For instance, the agriculture was very poor in hill districts of Kangra and Simla where recruits were easily available. In the year, 1926, it was argued: “Generally speaking recruitment is everywhere good, but the entirely inadequate pay of the constables does not attract good material from all communities and very few literate Sikhs and Hindus of suitable physique offer themselves for enlistment. It is thus impossible, except in the hill districts of Kangra and Shimla to maintain a communal

²⁹ *ibid*, p.151

³⁰ *PLCD*, 25 February-10 May 1932, Vol. XXI, Lahore, 1932, p.265

³¹ *PLCD*, 26 July- 3 August, 1929, Vol. XIII, Lahore, 1929, pp.276-77

balance and Muhammadans preponderance even in those districts where the Hindu element is strongest...”³²

This regional imbalance in recruitment and lack of interest among Hindus and Sikhs for recruitment led to the majority of the Muslims at the provincial level. In fact, as early as 1871, Muslims almost 60 per cent were in a majority among the lower ranks of the police.³³ The Sikhs were not easily available for recruitment for the police. In the year 1883, 1552 recruits were enlisted. The annual police administration report lamented only 114 Sikhs were obtained, ‘and that of the total number [of Sikhs] more than half were of the less desirable castes’.³⁴ The poor remunerative value of the police employment was a major problem during this time. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Muslims were always in majority in the police department of the province. In 1903, 1764 recruits were enlisted in the constabulary. Out of which, 1192 or 68 per cent recruits were Muslims and 572 were non-Muslims (Hindus), which included 89 Sikhs.³⁵ As majority of the constabulary was Muslim, it had a spill over effect. As there was no direct recruitment at the upper subordinate levels, most of the Head Constables and Sergeants (later on Assistant Sub-Inspectors) were promoted from the constabulary. These posts were major incentives for the constables. The majority at the upper subordinate level was comprised of Muslims.

In case of police service in the Punjab, the Sikhs were least attracted community. It was repeatedly reported by the recruiting officers that they were not ready to join the police. The seriousness of the situation may be judged from the following case. In 1936, the Superintendent of Police, Lyallpur, remarked that early in the year a special appeal was issued for Sikh recruits, of whom 20 were required by the Delhi Police and 20 by the

³² *Annual Police Administration Report of Punjab for the year 1926*, (henceforth *PARP*, 1926), p.23

³³ *PARP*, 1871, p.59

³⁴ *PARP*, 1883, p.20

³⁵ *PARP*, 1903, p.16

Government Railway Police, but only 8 or 10 applicants came forward, none of whom was suitable.³⁶ By dint of special efforts 18 recruits were produced, of whom only 8 could be selected.³⁷ However, the Sikhs were, as the case with Hindus, were better represented in higher ranks which were more remunerative posts. As shown below, out of 847 Sub-Inspectors in the province in 1921, almost 159 were Sikhs. However at the lower ranks, the number remained exceptionally small till the end of the colonial rule.

By April 1942, the proportion of Muslims in the police force of the province had reached up to 70 per cent in the regular police. The proportion of the Hindus was only 19 per cent and those of Sikhs only ten per cent. As stated above, officially Hindus and Sikhs were entitled to a proportion of 40 per cent and 20 per cent respectively for employment in the police department. In 1942, the situation was similar in case of the total constabulary including the temporary additional police.³⁸ The situation remained same until the partition took place in 1947.³⁹

The Communal Violence

The partisan role of police, both Muslim and non-Muslim, was very much evident during communal riots in the Punjab. The communal violence was not a pervasive phenomenon in pre 1919 period.⁴⁰ There were only sporadic incidents of communal violence during the first two decades of twentieth century.⁴¹ However the communal violence became

³⁶ The Delhi province relied on the Punjab for the recruits of its police.

³⁷ *PARP*, 1936, p.24

³⁸ The additional police was a temporary force to aid the regular police. See the sections below.

³⁹ As discussed in the chapter III.

⁴⁰ K.L.Tuteja, "Jallianwala Bagh: A critical Juncture in the Indian National Movement", *Social Scientist*, Vol 25, No. 1-2, January February 1997, p.35

⁴¹ N.G. Barrier, "The Arya Samaj and Congress Politics in the Punjab, 1894-1903", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, May 1967, p.368. The two important incidents were the murder of Lekh Ram, an Arya Samajist zeolot in 1897 and communal rioting connected with Bengal partition agitation.

a major problem during 1920's. By this time, the nature of communal violence and its modalities differed from all previous incidents.⁴²

By 1920's, both Muslim and non-Muslim, had lost their faith in the police. There was widespread distrust for police and masses suspected the role of police during communal violence. The major anti-police feelings surfaced during the communal riots in 1920's. In 1920's, riots took place at many places in the Punjab. In Multan, three major riots took place in this decade in September 1922, April 1923, and July 1927. The other significant centre of communal riots was Amrtisar city where twice major riots took place in the 1920's in April 1923 and in May 1923. Riots took place at Panipat in July 1923 and were repeated in August 1925. The other major centres of riots were Chiniot (March 1924), Rewari (February 1926), Rawalpindi (May 1926), Lahore (May 1927), Softa (May 1928), and Malikpur (May 1928).⁴³ By 1920's, a standardised feature of dealing with riots was the independent enquiries by different parties in establishing the responsibility and measure the damage to human life and property during a riot. The different communities and interests involved held their independent enquiries often blaming the other community. This often provoked the blamed party into holding a counter-enquiry. This vicious circle of communal enquiries further exacerbated the communal tensions after the riots and embittered relations among communities.

During most of these riots, and in the subsequent public enquires, police was often accused of partisan character. For instance, in Multan riots of September 1922, the leaders of

⁴² The earlier episodes of communal violence were rooted in local issues, involved small segments of the population and were offshoots of official decisions pertaining to the regulation of religious ceremonies. By the 1920's community identity marked by differentiation between the 'self' and 'other' came to determine the relationship among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs and was fostered by institutionalised politics. See, Amrit Kaur Basra, "Communal Riots in the Punjab, 1923-28", Unpublished Ph.d Thesis, University of Delhi, New Delhi, 1999, p.403

⁴³ For the causes, details and anatomy of violence of each riot see, Amrit Kaur Basra, "Communal Riots in the Punjab, 1923-28", Unpublished Ph.d Thesis, University of Delhi, New Delhi, 1999. However, her focus is on riots and 'communalism' as such whereas the focus of the present paper is on the role of police exclusively.

the Hindu community blamed police for its partisan character.⁴⁴ Narender Seth, President of the Punjab Hindu Sabha accused of police siding with the Muslims.⁴⁵ In April 1923, again Hindu-Muslim riots took place in Multan city. It was contended by *Milap*, a vernacular newspaper, that respectable Hindus belonging to the Indian National Congress were harassed by the police in Multan. The anti-Hindu character of the police was underlined. The newspaper also published statistics stating the Muslim preponderance in the police department.⁴⁶ The statistics stating the preponderance of Muslims in the police department was used as an explanation for the communal character of the police. In this way, the Muslim majority character of the police and the communal character of the police were linked together.

In April 1923, Hindu-Muslim riots took place in Amritsar city. A conspicuous feature of these riots was the indifference of the Sikhs to the riots: they were neither targeted nor did they participate in the violence. As the strength of the police was precarious in the city at the time of the riot, Deputy Commissioner Dunnet asked Mehtab Singh, President of Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee to provide him with Akali volunteers. Almost 200 Akali volunteers patrolled several segments of the city. Apart from these 200 Akali volunteers, the students and teachers of Khalsa College of Amritsar also helped in this task. The Akali volunteers were acknowledged by the local officials for their discipline.⁴⁷ The Akali

⁴⁴ 'There was a serious rioting in Multan on the occasion of the *Muharram*. On 3 September 1922, the *Tazia* was damaged by a telephone wire and while it was being repaired, stones were said to be thrown at it by Hindus. A false rumour of the desecration of a mosque led to a reprisal by Muslims and troops were brought into the city in considerable numbers before the disturbances could be quelled. It was estimated that about seven persons were killed and about fifty were seriously injured. Damage to property of nearly Rs. 3 Lakhs was caused.' See *Fortnightly Report for the Punjab for the first half of September 1922*, Home (political), September 1922, no. 18, GOI, NAI, p.13

⁴⁵ Amrit Kaur Basra, "Communal Riots in the Punjab, 1923-28", p.238

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.257

⁴⁷ In 1921, during the Akali movement, in Amritsar military style campsites were established by the Akalis to accommodate approximately 50,000 Akalis who had congregated in Amritsar for the agitation in 1921. Duties performed by the Akalis consisted of protecting the temples in the vicinity at which sentries equipped with Sam Brown belts and swords of a uniform pattern were posted. Sentries were relieved at fixed hours and registers were maintained to ensure the correct rotation of duties. An army of 5,000 Akalis, mostly ex-soldiers was kept

volunteers were dispensed following the arrival of more police and army. However, the local people showed their confidence in the Akali volunteers and they continued to patrol the streets. It was made possible because the Sikhs were not involved in the riot.⁴⁸ In brief, masses had more faith, in any community not directly involved in the riots than in the police. It shows masses had lost faith in the police and there was a widespread distrust for the police.

In August 1925, riots broke out in the Panipat city. After the riots, the 'Hindu leaders' stressed the anti-Hindu character of the police during the riots. On the other hand, the 'Muslim leaders' blamed administration for siding with Hindus.⁴⁹ The counter allegations were made by both local Muslim and Hindu leaders for involvement of the police and administration in siding with the 'other' community. The image of police as arbitrator of peace and order had sufficiently deteriorated by this time. The police were perceived as perpetrators of violence then the defenders of the order.

A similar situation was apparent in case of Amritsar riots in 1926. The inhabitants of the city dreaded police more than the rioters. The masses were not ready to come out of their homes even after the end of riots. The Gurkhas were recruited as additional police during the riots in Amritsar. The Gurkhas proved extremely useful in reviving the faith of the masses in the raj, for they were considered impartial by the inhabitants. In the provincial Legislative Council, it was argued that the preponderance of Muslims in the police of the Amritsar district was instrumental in perpetuation of violence. It was noticed that the communal composition of the police force of the Amritsar city was in favour of Muslims: there were 260 Muslim constables, 31 Hindus and 31 Sikh constables. A similar situation prevailed at the level of Amritsar district as a whole. In the District, there were 677 Muslim constables, and

in reserve, under an ex-subedar of the Indian army to deal with any emergency. See Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State*, 2005, p.212

⁴⁸ Amrit Kaur Basra, "Communal Riots in the Punjab, 1923-28", pp.114-115 & pp.231-32

⁴⁹ *ibid*, p.244

only 119 Hindus and 107 Sikh constables. Among Head Constables there were 83 Muslim and only 18 Hindu and 24 Sikhs.⁵⁰

In May 1927, riots broke out in Lahore city. During and after the riots there was distrust among the non-Muslim population of the city for the police force posted in the city. It was alleged that during the riots, the police connived at some of the offences and failed in certain other cases to arrest the offenders on the spot. Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, the Finance Member, Government of Punjab, admitted the involvement of police and also the fact that the majority of the police force of the city was Muslim.⁵¹ It was reported in the Legislative Council that after the riots, the non-Muslims were not ready to open their shops nor were they ready to come out of their houses. Mr. Emerson, the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Lahore took the leading men of both Hindus and Muslim communities to persuade the shopkeepers to open their shops. The 'nervous' Hindus were not easily convinced for the majority of the police in the city were Muslim.⁵² The experience gained during the communal riots of 1926 in Amritsar rescued the administration. Instructions were issued by the provincial Government to the Inspector General of Police to recruit a certain number of Gurkhas for the purpose of employment in Additional police for Lahore. An additional police force was raised containing a significant number of Gurkhas: out of total 350, there were 9 Gurkha Head Constables and 77 Gurkha Constables.⁵³ After these riots, a serious thought was given to recruit more Hindus in the police force of Lahore city. Special efforts were made to recruit 'Hindus and Sikhs of the right class' that is Jat Sikhs and Dogras, Jat Rajputs, Ahirs, and Gujars in the Eastern Punjab. Among the 350 men recruited in above

⁵⁰ *PLCD*, 17 March 1927, Vol. X, No. 12, p.540

⁵¹ *PLCD*, 18 July-25 November 1927, Vol. X-B, p.993

⁵² Based on the speech of a member Sardar Habib Ullah, delivered on 18 July 1927, *PLCD*, 18 July-25 November 1927, Vol. X-B, p.768

⁵³ *PLCD*, 18 July-25 November 1927, Vol. X-B, p.774

case, majority were Sikhs and Hindus.⁵⁴ In fact, the government was always eager to recruit more 'suitable' Hindus and Sikhs in the constabulary but it was repeatedly reported that they were not readily available.⁵⁵ The recruitment of Gurkhas in the above case was a novel feature. In fact, during the Hindu-Muslim riots, Gurkhas were often preferred by the colonial state.⁵⁶

During the Rawalpindi riots of May 1926, the SGPC blamed police for obstructing Hindus and Sikhs from safeguarding their property. It was alleged that the Muslim rioters were assisted by the police in escaping with the loot. Govind Ram Khanna, General Secretary of the Punjab Provincial Hindu Sabha, maintained that the authorities had done nothing to protect the Hindus, who were subjected to violence by the Muslims and especially the police.⁵⁷ In June 1927, riots, again, broke out at Rawalpindi.⁵⁸ The prominent members of the Hindu community argued for they were not protected adequately during the riots because their community was not adequately represented in the police department. The Ganj Mandi, the place where 'terrible arson and loot took place' was between two police posts. Due to police inaction, several cart loads of booty were taken away by the rioters 'under the eyes of

⁵⁴ It included 2 Head Constables and 84 Constables as Sikhs; 2 Head Constables and 122 Constables as Hindus and 2 Head Constables and 67 Constables as Muslims and 67 Gukhas as mentioned above. See *PLCD*, 18 July-25 November 1927

⁵⁵ See Chapter II.

⁵⁶ During the Akali movement Gurkhas were called but not directly employed. 'The 2nd Battalion arrived at Lahore in March 1922 under the command of Major N. F. Graeme due to Akali unrest and to support the Police. The Battalion stood for sometime and then moved to Dharmsala in May 1922. 'The Akali disturbers of the public tranquillity' as a Punjab Government letter described them, again became active and in August the 1st Battalion was called out for another phase what was unofficially described as the 'third Sikh War'. Finally the Punjab Government arrested the SGPC members on 13/14 October in the close attendance of the 1st Battalion. From October 1923 onwards the 1st Battalion was 'uncomfortably unsettled' in Fort Govindgarh. In January 1924, the members of the SGPC were again arrested and serious trouble was only narrowly averted by the presence of two companies in close support of the Police' See Brigadier E.V. R. Bellers, *The History of the 1st King George V's own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment)*, Vol. II, 1920-1947, The Wellington Press, Aldershot, 1956 p.10

⁵⁷ Amrit Kaur Basra, "Communal Riots in the Punjab, 1923-28", pp.251-52

⁵⁸ There seems to be some confusion in Amrit Kaur Basra, "Communal Riots in the Punjab, 1923-28", The work mentions only May 1926 riots but links the incidents of the June 1927 riot with the May riots. Moreover June 1927 riot is not mentioned. \

the police without any obstruction or hindrance or resistance offered by them'.⁵⁹ Apparently, the blame was on police due to its partisan character.

A similar situation prevailed, in case of the Hindu majority districts of the Punjab, such as Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, and Karnal. In these districts, the constabulary was largely Muslim, resulting in distrust for the constabulary. The Muslims dominated at the level of Constables, Head constables, and Sub-Inspectors, thus creating a suspicion in the minds of the Hindu majority regarding the reliability of the police.⁶⁰ By 1932, 80 per cent of the constabulary in Ambala District was recruited from outside the district and majority was Muslim. In some cases Muslim inhabitants of these districts alleged police in league with majority Hindus to suppress Muslims. In few cases, the partisan role played by the police was even accepted by the government. This was the case of the *Softa Lambardars*, of Palwal of Gurgaon District, who were 'overawed' by the Police and Hindu majority of the area.⁶¹

The Communal Politics

In early twentieth century, a major aspect of the process of communalisation of politics and society in the Punjab was increasingly vigorous campaigns for securing more and more government jobs for one's own community. The Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, and later on depressed classes' leadership were anxious to secure more and more employment for their respective communities.⁶²

In the Punjab, the large number of Hindus lived in the urban areas. The urban Hindus consisted of such castes as Khattris, Aroras, and Agarwals. During pre-colonial times, a large number of people belonging to these castes had served in the administration of Ranjit Singh

⁵⁹ *PLCD*, 3,4, 5, January 1927, Vol. X, No.1, pp.313-14

⁶⁰ *PLCD*, 26 July- 3 August, 1929, Vol. XIII, pp.276-77

⁶¹ *PLCD*, 26 November-28 March 1929, Vol. XII, p.472

⁶² A major part of the provincial legislative council debates and later on provincial legislative assembly debates was devoted to this aspect.

and others formed a major component of those dealing with trade and commerce. The establishment of the British rule further created opportunities of growth for these communities with their ascendancy in education, professions, trade and industry. By the late nineteenth century, Hindus were the largest literate religious community in the Punjab. In 1891, the Hindus in the Punjab accounted for 89 per cent of the total literates in the Punjab. Among the English knowing literates the number of Punjabi Hindus was 82 per cent. The Hindus with a population of only 35 per cent dominated the government jobs. The Punjabi Hindus held more than 80 per cent of 'superior appointments' carrying salary of Rs. 75 or more per month.⁶³ The educated Hindus also dominated professions like teaching, law, medicine, engineering and journalism.

K.L. Tuteja and O.P.Grewal argued that by the late nineteenth century there was a marked shift in the policy of the Government of the Punjab. The government favoured Muslims for government employment. This antagonised the Hindus and a communalism concerning appropriation of more and more jobs for Hindus took birth.⁶⁴ However, the case of the police department was different. Muslims dominated police from its inception. In 1871, in terms of religious affiliations, there were 5 Christians, 10,272 Muslims and 6,463 Hindus amongst the lower constabulary. Therefore as early as 1871, Muslims with an around 60 per cent presence were in a majority among the lower ranks of the police.⁶⁵

The Hindus were largely urban based literate population. However, throughout the colonial period, literacy was no criteria for securing employment in the police constabulary.⁶⁶ Therefore, all religious communities had equal chances of securing employment in the police

⁶³ See, K.L. Tuteja & O.P. Grewal, "Emergence of Hindu Communalism in Early Twentieth Century Punjab", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 20. No. 7-8. July August 1992, pp.7-8

⁶⁴ K.L. Tuteja & O.P. Grewal, "Emergence of Hindu Communalism in Early Twentieth Century Punjab", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 20. No. 7-8. July August 1992, pp.10-11

⁶⁵ *PARP*, 1871, p.59

⁶⁶ See chapter II.

irrespective of their respective education backgrounds. Muslims were in majority in the Punjab but they were backward than Hindus⁶⁷.

The non-Muslims were always in minority in the police department. In the nineteenth century there was no protest against the preponderance of Muslims in the police. In the early twentieth century the polarisation among Hindus and Muslims took place over securing government employment. The organised efforts were made by both Hindus and Muslims to secure communitarian interests. The establishment of Punjab Hindus Sabha on 16 December 1906 in Lahore was an important development in this direction. Prominent Hindus leaders of the Punjab like Lala Lajpat Rai, Ruchi Ram Sahni, Harkrishan Lal, Ram Bhaj Datta, etc were members of the Punjab Hindus Sabha. By 1908, its branches were set up in all district towns. The central goal of the Punjab Hindu Sabha was to secure more representation of Hindus in government services and representative bodies. In 1907, the establishment of the Muslim League and setting up of its branches in the Punjab further aggravated the situation.

The preponderance of Muslims in the police department was articulated by the Punjab Hindu Sabha as a major wrong against Hindus. The Hindu communal leaders devised an argument to justify more representation of Hindus in the police. According to them, the major factor responsible for the oppressive and tyrannical character of the police was due to its Muslim preponderance. In 1909, a deputation of leading Hindus of the province waited on and met Lord Minto, the Viceroy of India, when he visited the province.⁶⁸ The deputation argued that 'the Hindus were suffering at the hands of the police because there was a large majority of the Muhammadan police officers in the service'. As a result of which a select and

⁶⁷ K.L. Tuteja & O.P. Grewal. "Emergence of Hindu Communalism in Early Twentieth Century Punjab", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 20. No. 7-8. July August 1992, p.8

⁶⁸ Its mentioned in the speech of Chahudri Afzal Haq (Hoshiarpur cum Ludhiana, Rural) delivered on 10 March 1927 in the Provincial Legislative Council. There was no criticism of his speech on factual grounds and therefore it can be taken as a truth. *PLCD*, 3,4, 5, January 1927, Vol. X, No.1, pp.318

confidential circular was issued directing that all possible facilities should be provided to the Hindus who may be willing to join the police department'.⁶⁹ In 1913 a resolution was passed by the Punjab Hindu Conference held at Delhi for the inadequacy of the Hindu element in the rank and file of the higher police service of the province. The resolution mentioned: "...in the matter of making appointments to the public services, more especially in the Police Department, undue preference had been, and was being, given to considerations of religion and creed rather than to merit, fitness and seniority in service, to the detriment of efficiency and interest of the Hindu community". The government response to this resolution was an outright rejection of the allegation made. According to the provincial government fitness was the first consideration for any recruitment. However, it was argued, if fitness alone were considered then the inequalities which were complained might have tended to be even greater than they were during those times. In other words, the government believed it had made sufficient room for communal representation even at the cost of fitness and efficiency but was unable to attract the Hindus for the constabulary ranks. It was recognised that Hindus were not ready to enter into the police service even at increased and revised rates of salaries for the constabulary. It was justified that it was not the policy of the government to increase the salaries further merely to attract the Hindus. According to the official viewpoint as Hindus don't enter at the constabulary ranks it was natural that they were not adequately represented at the higher ranks which were filled by the promotions from the lower ranks.⁷⁰

Among Hindus, the 'agricultural' castes viz. mostly Hindu Jats, were always in a lead to secure more government employment opportunities for their own community. On the

⁶⁹ *PLCD*, 3,4, 5, January 1927, Vol. X, No.1, pp.318-19

⁷⁰ *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab*, Vol. IV, Punjab Government (Branch) Press, Simla, 1915, p.19

persistent demand of the Hindu Jat leaders, a government notification was issued in 1915, favouring the increased employment of Hindu Jats in the public services of the province.⁷¹

Table 3.1: Proportion of 'Hindu Zamindars' in the Upper Subordinate police in 1928

Ranks	Total Strength in the province	Hindu Zamindars
D.S.P	47	2
Inspectors	134	9
Sub-Inspectors	845	87
Head-Constables	2849	236

Source: *PLCD*, Vol. XI, Appendix, Lahore, 1928, p.1352

In 1926, G.C. Narang, issued a letter to all the prominent Hindus of the Punjab for advising Hindus to join the police department in larger numbers. In this letter he suggested, as the payment of a constable was low, the constable 'who would undergo pecuniary loss by accepting the posts of constables carrying a pay of Rs.18 per mensem, should be compensated from a special fund to be raised for the purpose'.⁷² In fact the gravity of the situation may be judged from the fact that most of the Hindus who appeared as witnesses before the Police Enquiry Committee (1926) said in their evidence that corruption in the police department was mainly due to the fact that there was a majority of Muslims in the department.⁷³

In opposition, the preponderance of the Muslims in the police ranks was defended by the Muslim communalist leadership. To counter the Hindu communal propaganda of accusing the preponderance of the Muslims in the constabulary as responsible for imperfect character of the police department, they devised an alternative interpretation accusing Hindus as corrupt and cowards. They held Hindus as too weak and feeble to perform the police duties adequately. Secondly, corruption in the police department was attributed to the corrupting

⁷¹ *PLCD*, 31 July-3 August 1922, Vol. IV, no. 1, p.64

⁷² *PLCD*, 3,4,5th January, 1927, Vol. X, No. 1, p.319

⁷³ *ibid*, p.319

influence of Hindus in the police department. For instance, in 1927, a good number of Hindus were recruited for the additional police force for the city of Lahore. One Shaikh Faiz Muhammad, member of the provincial legislative council seriously doubted the 'mettle' of these recruits for the police work: "these Hindu constables should be posted in Vehoa and Shah Wah stations in Dera Ghazi Khan District and Isa Khel in Mianwali district in order to test their mettle".⁷⁴

By the beginning of the World War II, the number of the provincial police also increased and also proportionally that of Muslims. In 1941, in a sharp polemical speech in the legislative assembly, Gokul Chand Narang⁷⁵, a leader of opposition, dwelt over three and half hour on the subject of preponderance of Muslims in services under the existing provincial government. In 1937, the Unionist Party formed the Unionist Government in the Punjab. The Unionist Government was understood as a party of landowning zamindars and consisted of both Hindu and Muslim interests. According to Narang it was a well sought out policy of the Unionist Government to favour Muslims against non-Muslims in case of government employment. Therefore the overrepresentation of Muslims in police as well as in some other provincial departments was a result of the Unionist government's policies.

G. C. Narang corroborated his arguments with facts. For instance, in case of the Additional Police, raised to meet the war time exigency, the situation was highly in favour of Muslim community. There the representation of the Muslims in the ranks of Inspectors was 66.7 per cent and there were no Hindus and Sikhs. Muslim Sub-inspectors and Assistant Sub-

⁷⁴ *PLCD*, 18 July-25 November 1927, p.1006

⁷⁵ Gokul Chand Narang, author of the book, *The Transformation of Sikhism* (1912) belonged to a Hindu Middle class family of Arora caste. After his studies in Punjab and Calcutta Universities, he pursued his higher education abroad. He started his career as a teacher of history at D.A.V. College, Lahore, but soon shifted to legal profession. Narang was a prominent member of Hindu Mahasabha for a long time. He did not take part in the nationalist movement led by Congress. He believed that the Hindus formed a pan-Indian community, and had a highly 'glorified past' in the ancient times. See K.L. Tuteja, "Interpreting Sikh History: A study of Gokul Chand Narang's *The Transformation of Sikhism*", K.L. Tuteja & Sunita Pathania (eds), *Historical Diversities: Society, Politics & culture*, Manhor, New Delhi, 2008, p.403-05

Inspectors were 60 per cent and 60.5 per cent respectively. The Head Constables and Constables were 75.7 per cent and 77.7 per cent respectively. On the class basis Inspectors were all agriculturists. Sub Inspectors, Assistant Sub-inspectors, Head Constables, Nails, Lance-Nails and foot constabulary were 95 per cent, 90.7 per cent, 94 per cent, 100 per cent, 100 per cent and 97.8 per cent agriculturists respectively. Narang estimated that the Additional police was composed of none but agriculturist Muslims.⁷⁶

In case of regular police force in the province, on 1st January 1941, Muslims were: Inspectors 58.5 per cent; Assistant Sub Inspectors 59 per cent; Head constables 63.6 per cent; and constables 70.5 per cent.⁷⁷

Table 3.2: Number of Muslim Superintendents of Police from 1937-41

Year	Muslims	Hindus	Sikhs
1937	8	3	4
1939	10	2	3
1940	11	2	3
1941	13	2	3

In case of Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs) , Muslims were 43.7 per cent and Hindus 20 per cent in 1937. The consolidated list of services issued in January 1941 showed that the Muslims were 50 per cent and Hindus 16.1 per cent. There were in all 40 DSPs in the Punjab. Gokul Chand in his speech alleged that most of the non-Muslim DSPs were appointed either outside the province or were on the non-executive line.⁷⁸

While there was an overwhelming preponderance of Muslims in Police, from 1 April 1937 up to January 1938, 608 Muslims were recruited against 305 Hindus. The principle that a certain department was already overstaffed by one community was not applied in case of

⁷⁶ Sir G.C. Narang, *The Plight of the Punjab Minorities under the so called Unionist Government: A speech delivered during the General Discussion of the budget of 1941-42 in the Punjab Legislative Assembly*, available at NMML, New Delhi, p.68

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p.68

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.75

police department. For instance in case of Public Works Department, where the non-Muslims were in preponderance, recruitment of non-Muslims was altogether stopped. While the proportion of non-Muslims (Hindus and Sikhs etc.) was not as high in case of PWD as was that of Muslims in case of police department.⁷⁹ In other words, Narang argued that the number of Muslims increased during the tenure of Unionist Government and it was a consciously and carefully worked out policy of the Unionists. In brief he said that the Unionists favoured Muslims and agriculturists at the cost of non-Muslims and non-agriculturists.

On the behalf of Government, Minister of Public Works, Khizr Hayat Khan repudiated Narang's claims. Khizr refuted the argument that Unionist Government preferred Muslims at the cost of Non-Muslims. According to Khizr Hayat Khan, since the Unionist Government took office on 1st April 1937, the percentage of representation of Muslims among constables was 73.1 per cent, but by March 1941, it has come down to 70.5 per cent. Similarly the percentage of Muslims at the ranks of Head Constables and Assistant Sub-Inspectors came down from 66.5 per cent to 63.5 per cent, and 65 per cent to 59 per cent respectively. On the contrary, from 1 April 1937 to 7 March 1941, the percentage of Sikh constables increased from 8.1 per cent to 10.8 per cent of total. Similarly, the representation of Sikh Head Constables increased from 9.7 per cent to 11.1 per cent and the percentage of Sikh A.S.I increased from 14 per cent to 17 per cent. Most importantly he added: "We are not responsible for the recruitment of the lower ranks of police. Men are recruited by the Superintendent of Police; Assistant Sub-Inspectors, Head Constables and Constables are all recruited by police officers."⁸⁰

⁷⁹ *ibid.* pp.66-67

⁸⁰ *PLAD*, 25 February-11 March, 1941, Vol. XVI, pp.221-22

Conclusion

The communalisation of the police and the preponderance of the Muslims in the police are two distinct questions and should be studied separately as this chapter did. It suited the Hindu and Sikh communalists to link the two and demand for more vacancies for the Hindus and Sikhs in the police. Subsequently, when partition took place, the same argument became a dominant article of faith. The facts were cited to prove the preponderance of Muslims in the police to explain the violence against the non-Muslims. However, the Hindu and Sikhs in the police did the same in many incidents even when they were in minority in the police department. The majority of the Muslims in the constabulary was due to reluctance on the part of non-Muslims to join the constabulary. The non-Muslims' reluctance was welcomed by the Muslims as an employment opportunity. If anyone was responsible for the shortage of Hindus and Sikhs in the constabulary they were Hindus and Sikhs themselves for they were not ready to offer themselves for this employment. This was not understood by the Hindu and Sikh communal leaders and they kept on advocating for inclusion of more and more Hindus and Sikhs in the police when the Hindus and Sikhs themselves were least interested.

On the other hand, the communalisation of the constabulary was a part of wider societal-political changes through which the Punjab society underwent during the first half of the twentieth century. There was a constant growing alienation between the public and the police. The masses had lost their faith in the police much before the partition during the day o day dealings with the police as well as during the communal riots. It was established in the popular mind that a policeman is most likely to act according to his creed than his duty. This took place as the police was also a part of the society and the increasing communal rift in the society took over the police. It was this communalisation of the constabulary and not the

preponderance of one community at the cost of the other which was responsible for the worsening of the partition violence.⁸¹

⁸¹ This confusion remains even regarding the role of police in the post colonial situation, see Asghar Ali Engineer & Amarjit S. Narang (eds), *Minorities and Police in India*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2006

Chapter IV

Police and Rural Protest

"We the inhabitants of village Rohat, beg to lay down the following facts for your kind perusal and favourable considerations-

1. That a punitive police force has been imposed on our village since the 1st January 1940, for a period of one year, the cost of which to be recovered from us has been reassessed at about 4,500.

2. That we are at a loss to understand as to what led to the authorities to arrive at this decision, which came to us like a bomb-shell and that we were not given any opportunity to say anything in our defence. ...

6. That in the past we have been most law abiding and peace-loving...

As it is already known to you that we have suffered a lot due to the acuteness of the famine prevailing in the district and this extra charge of the police in question is nothing but a last straw to break the camel's back. When we cannot even make both ends meet it is well nigh impossible for us to bear the heavy charge."

Quoted in Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates, from 1 April- 30 April 1940, Vol. III, Lahore, 1942, p.680

During the colonial times, most of the population resided in the villages. Between 1881 and 1921, at least 90 per cent of the population in the Punjab were rural dwellers.¹ During this period, the rural Punjab differed in one important respect than the rest of the Indian society, the largest chunk of the army was recruited from the Punjab and entirely from rural areas. In this respect, it is useful to explore how these rural areas were policed?

The police had a very thin presence in the Punjab. Throughout the colonial period, on an average there was one policeman after a population of more than thousand people². In the early twentieth century, the police was greatly burdened by the extra duties due to political agitations, communal violent, war time duties, and ordinary crime. On the contrary, the role

¹ Neeladri Bhattacharya, "Agrarian Change in Punjab 1880-1940", Unpublished Ph.d Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, p.555

² In 1900, there was one policeman for a population of 1,019 in the Punjab. In 1940, the comparative number was 1,012. See the annual police administration reports for data.

of army in the internal defence, and use of brutal force considerably declined after 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre.³ In this scenario, it is important to understand how a small force dealt with major political and communal crimes. It is argued that the police adopted a number of ad hoc measures to deal with the sudden outbreaks and exigencies. The 'punitive police' was such an institution.

In this chapter an attempt is made to understand the role of 'punitive police'. The punitive police was a 'practice' to which colonial state, during the last decades of the raj, repeatedly took recourse in order to implement its will and make hegemonic presence in the rural Punjab.⁴ A village or a number of villages were held jointly responsible for the maintenance of police post in the neighbourhood. The entire expenses for salaries and upkeep of this contingent of police became a burden for inhabitants of village/villages under question. An annual budget was worked out in advance and it was allocated among the inhabitants according to their economic strength and involvement in 'criminal' and 'disruptive' activities. Those who troubled most paid the most.

According to the official view point, technically, there was no 'punitive' police in the province. The 'punitive police' was imposed under sections 15 and 15 (A) of the Indian Police Act V of 1861.⁵ Ironically, there was no mention of word 'punitive police' in these sections of the Act. Rather they mentioned the word 'Additional Police'.⁶ Similarly Punjab Police Rule 4.10 and 4.16 under which the 'punitive police' was sanctioned never mentioned the word 'punitive' rather the term 'additional' was used. In other words, according to the

³ see Introduction to this monograph

⁴ The 'punitive police' was imposed under the sections 15 and 15 (A) of the Indian Police Act V of 1861.

⁵ A further study is required to understand the origins of the punitive police practice in 1861 Act.

⁶ It should not be confused with the 'Additional Police' discussed somewhere else in the monograph. The basic difference between the Additional Police and the Punitive Police was that while the cost for the Additional Police was realised from the provincial finances, the cost of Punitive Police was met by a punitive tax imposed on the inhabitants of that area.

government, in principal, the 'punitive police' was not a punitive measure.⁷ However in the common usage and in the public debates, though it was understood and referred to as 'punitive' police even by the government officials, in strict official vocabulary 'additional' was preferred. Accordingly, the Government defended it as an 'Additional police force' and not as a 'punitive police'. As Sir John Mayanard said: "It is not a question of punishing a village for wrong done by particular person who live in that village. It is a question of imposing additional police because the circumstances are such as to make it necessary that additional police shall be imposed. No one... would question, when a village or any area is in reality in a disturbed or dangerous state, the propriety or indeed the duty to station police there".⁸ The government regarded it as unreasonable to hold the general tax-payer of the province as a whole responsible for the danger proceeding from the people of a certain area.⁹ The government interpreted the provisions of the law as preventive not punitive. The Finance Member, D. J. Boyd said: "It is because an area is found to be in a disturbed or dangerous state that the number of police is increased, or if the conduct of the inhabitants is such that additional police is required then Government quarter them. It is not of a punitive nature. They are additional police and that is what they are meant to be".¹⁰ The usage and traditions were invoked to justify the imposition of punitive police. As the Finance Member, Mr. D. J. Boyd said: "...there is a certain amount of communal responsibility in such matters...the Indian village community was definitely in the old times a unit, a corporate body and that position has not yet entirely disappeared and by usage, if not by definite law, communities are held jointly responsible for the conditions prevailing amongst them. That is very useful institution. It helps to preserve village life and at the same time it helps to

⁷ Act V of 1861, Section 15(3) says, "Subject to the provisions of sub-section (5) of this section, the cost of such additional police force shall be borne by the inhabitants of such area described in the proclamation". For details and text of the above provisions see, *PLCD*, 25 February-25 March, 1931, Vol. XVIII, Lahore, 1931, pp.5-7

⁸ *PLCD*, 16 March 1925, Vol. VIII, No. 12, Lahore, 1925, p.495

⁹ *PLCD*, 16 March 1925, Vol. VIII, No. 12, Lahore, 1925, p.595

¹⁰ *PLCD*, 24 June-21 December, Vol. XXV, Lahore, 1935, p.509

enforce...communal responsibility for the preservation of peace and in order to prevent gross injustice to individuals.”¹¹

There are two competing versions regarding the procedure followed for imposition of punitive police posts: official and popular. The *official* version was increasingly contested and was under criticism by the opponents. According to the official version, the proposal for the imposition of a punitive police in an area normally originated from *Thandedar* or the office in-charge of the police station in the vicinity of the disturbed area. The proposal was forwarded to the District Superintendent of Police and he in turn forwarded it to the Deputy Commissioner of the District. If the Deputy Commissioner was convinced, the Tahsildar was asked to visit the disturbed area and to make enquiries. Tahsildar took the economic capacity of the people in the area and the land revenue payments were considered as the index of the economic strength of the area. Once the enquiry was over, the proposal was forwarded in succession to the Commissioner, the Deputy Inspector-General, Inspector General, Home-Secretary, Home Member of provincial government. At all stages, these officials went through the details of the charges from the administrative point of view to ascertain whether it was necessary to impose the punitive police or not?¹² The government defended its procedural accuracy in establishing the punitive police posts. For instance, it was argued that the official efficacy of this procedure may be judged from the fact that from 1st January 1932 to 24 October 1934 only 35 proposals were received by the Home Member: of these 9 were turned down entirely by Government; fourteen of these were modified and it was only one third of the proposals which were accepted. According to official explanation, it was an unflinching proof of the precision carried out by the government in such cases. However, the official statistics may be misleading. There were only 35 proposals but one proposal

¹¹ *PLCD*, 24 June-4 December, Vol. XXV, 1934, Lahore, 1935, p.510

¹² See *PLCD*, 24 June-21 December, 1934, Vol. XXV, Lahore, 1935, 508

sometimes could carry a plan to impose punitive police on 50-60 villages. Therefore number of proposals or cases should not be mistaken with the number of villages which was exceptionally large.

The popular version was critical of the government policy. According to the critics, it was the local thanedar, who wielded, the arbitrary powers, in deciding the imposition of the punitive police in an area. It was argued, that proposal and imposition of punitive police on a village or area depended more on the equations between the thanedar and the village. The hostility of the thanedar towards an area could result into the proposals for the imposition of punitive police post. Further, imposition and more importantly withdrawal of a punitive post was contingent upon the satisfaction of the local authorities. It was the equation between the Thandedar and the village/villages which was decisive. As one critic said: "He lets off some people to commit thefts or minor crimes which he dose not trace out and does not punish the perpetrators, but he continues to bring the crimes to the notice of the higher authorities..."¹³

The Punitive Police and Politics

The official classification of cases under which the imposition of the punitive police took place included: 'commission of crimes', 'lawlessness', 'criminality', 'suppression of evidence', 'turbulence', 'feuds and factions', 'cattle thefts', etc. Sometimes the reasons were interesting: in case of a village Nambal of Rawalpindi District, a punitive police was imposed for three years, for an 'assault and outrage on the European ladies of the Lawrence School'.¹⁴ In another case, a punitive post was imposed at a village Tibbar of Gurdaspur district for one year for 'deliberately cutting the canal bank 13 times'.¹⁵ However, the importance of the

¹³ Chaudhari Allah Dad Khan, Member Legislative Council (from Ambala Division, Norht East, Muhammadan, Rural) on 24 October 1934. See *PLCD*, 24 June-21 December 1934, Vol. XXV, Lahore, 1935, p.513

¹⁴ *PLCD*, 1922-23, Vol. IV, p.1143

¹⁵ *PLCD*, 1922-23, Vol. IV, p.1141

punitive police in the maintenance of the colonial order of things will be completely missed if we ignore its political role.

The punitive police posts were used more as a tool to deal with the political sedition than the usual crime. The incidence of imposition of punitive police posts confirms this point. The number of the punitive police posts significantly increased during the Rowlatt Act agitation and subsequent Non-cooperation and Akali movements in the Punjab. During the Akali movement, the punitive police posts were repeatedly used as a tool of repression. The number of punitive police posts at the end of 1921 was only sixteen: 7 Sub-Inspectors (SI), 17 Head Constables (HC), 4 Mounted Head Constables (MHC), 80 Foot Constables (FC), and 24 Mounted Constables (MC).¹⁶ By the end of 1925, when the Akali movement was about to end, the number had increased to eighty seven punitive police posts: 2 Inspectors, 60 S.I., 154 HC, 5 Mounted HC, 940 FC and 30 MC. The largest number of posts was in the Lahore District. In Amritsar District, largely affected by the Akali Movement, 'large area posts consisting of from 70 to 100 men' were imposed. The efficacy of these police posts, in Amritsar District, in achieving their objective was applauded by the Inspector General of Police: "They have secured extraordinarily good results and have practically stamped out crime in the area concerned".¹⁷ In next year as the Akali Movement came to an end, the number of police posts also declined. In 1926, the number of punitive police posts had declined from 87 to 48. The number of police personnel employed also declined: 1 DSP, 2 Inspectors, 42 S.I., 90 Head Constables and 652 Constables.¹⁸

The number of punitive police posts consistently declined in the next few years. However, it never reached the figure that was prevalent at the beginning of the Akali movement. In 1927, the number of posts was still forty four: 2 DSP, 40 SI, 78 HC, and 617

¹⁶The number of posts and strength is mentioned separately because one post could sometimes represent strength of more than 100 men and area of fifty villages. *PARP*, 1921, p.14

¹⁷ *PARP*, 1925, p.14

¹⁸ *PARP*, 1926,p.19

FC. An important cause for the persistence in the number of punitive police posts was the turbulent nature of affairs in the late 1920's: many major riots took place in Punjab such as Multan , Amritsar , Panipat (July 1923), Rawalpindi , Lahore etc.¹⁹ In fact, the largest individual post was located in Multan city in consequence of the outbreak of communal disorder in July 1927.²⁰ In Multan the post continued in 1928 as well but at a reduced strength: one Inspector, 2 S.I., 8 H.C., and 62 F.C. A similar post was established in Rawalpindi after the May 1926 riots. The post remained in existence even after 1928, however, its strength went down 1928 onwards: 1 DSP, 3 SI, 5 HC, 60 FC.²¹ The punitive police posts in Rawalpindi and Multan came to an end by the end of the year 1929. Any how in the post Akali movement, till early 1930's the communal factors were responsible for the imposition of the punitive police posts. For instance, in 1929, a punitive police post was located at Qadian in the Gurdaspur District with a strength of 1 SI, 3 HC, and 25 FC. The area was disturbed due to the communal violence: "this measure was found necessary to control the disturbed area and to punish the inhabitants for their misconduct in the kine slaughter agitation".²² Most of the times, communal violence was restricted to urban areas, therefore it was only pretext in which punitive police was imposed in an urban area otherwise usually it was a practice followed for rural areas. In case of riots, punitive police was mostly imposed on communal lines. Only one religious community was held responsible for the cost of the post. For instance, in June 1940, a punitive police post was established in Lahore city for one year, after the communal riots. In this case only Muslim residents of the city were

¹⁹ For the causes, details and anatomy of violence of each riot see, Amrit Kaur Basra, "Communal Riots in the Punjab, 1923-28", Unpublished Ph.d Thesis, University of Delhi, New Delhi, 1999

²⁰ *PARP*, 1927, p.12

²¹ *PARP*, 1928, p.12

²² The Qadian was and is the head quarter of the Ahmadiyan Movement. *PARP*, 1929, p.15

held responsible.²³ In case, those who failed to make the payments, the amount was realised by sale of attachments and moveable property.²⁴

In 1929, after the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress and the subsequent nationalist agitation, there was further increase in the number of punitive police posts. In 1929, there were only twenty nine posts, by the end of 1930, the number had increased to forty three posts. The strength of the punitive police post almost doubled during this period: from 2 Inspectors, 15 S.I., 16 A.S.I, 42 HC, and 355 Constables to 2 Inspectors, 25 SI, 24 ASI, 67 HC, 654 Constables. The punitive police was utilised as an adjunct to curb political dissent: "The increase in numbers was entirely due to the dangerous and disturbed state of affairs which lasted so long and was on such a scale that the ordinary strength of districts was not capable of dealing with it".²⁵ In a number of cases, the punitive police posts were imposed during the Civil Disobedience Movement. For instance, in October 1930, a punitive police post was sanctioned for Rohtak Mandi (grain market). According to the official explanation, the Mandi was the hub of all political activities: "Rohtak Mandi was the centre of all agitation connected with the civil disobedience movement in the district and financed unlawful activities which led to a large number of arrests. A number of police had to be present there practically every day to keep peace and order".²⁶ It was reported that the imposition of the tax was felt so heavy on the 'petty shopkeepers' that they were leaving the market on this account.

After the Civil Disobedience Movement, the number of punitive police posts considerably declined during the 1930's as no major political movement took place in this period. The number of punitive police posts in 1933 was only twenty: 2 Inspectors, 5 SI, 10

²³ *PLCD*, 1 December-1941-25 February 1942, Vol. XVIII, Lahore, 1942, pp. 26-28

²⁴ See the case of residents of Rewari Town, District Gurgaon. *PLCD*, 18 July -25 November, 1927, Vol. X-B, pp.904-05

²⁵ *PARP*, 1930, pp.22-24

²⁶ *PLCD*, 25 February- 25 March, 1931, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1931, p.389

ASI, 33 HC, and 291 Constables. The chief reason for the existence of punitive police posts during 1930's was the dacoity. On 1st March 1933, a Mobile Police Force was raised in the Ferozpur District: 1 Inspector, 2 SI, 1 ASI, 5 Mounted HC, 40 Mounted Constables, 1 HC and 18 FC.²⁷ This Mobile Police Force was exclusive of the punitive police force in the district. Around 76 villages were held responsible for the payment for expenditures of this force. From 1933-35, the total expenditure was estimated at 1, 22,511 rupees.²⁸ The chief reason for raising the Mobile Police Forces was the liquidation of the armed gangs and dacoits in the district. The decrease in the number of violent crime was hailed as a justification for the existence of such a force. During 1933, the dacoity cases in Ferozpur district decreased from 49 to 29 cases. The 'Force' killed no less than 11 'notorious' dacoits during the year but also captured eighty six others, 'two of whom took fatal doses of poison just before their arrest'.²⁹ In 1935, fifty four dacoits were arrested or killed in the Ferozpur district. Several dangerous gangs were also accounted for by the Lahore and Amritsar police, notably those of 'Mahanta and Allu', which were responsible for a number of serious crime.³⁰

By 1935, the number of punitive police posts has decreased to only fourteen cases: 2 Inspectors, 8 SI, 10 ASI, 25 HC, and 297 FC. During the year, eleven punitive posts lapsed and no new post was established. As a result of which by the end of 1935, there were only three punitive police posts in the province: 1 SI, 2 ASI, 4 HC, and 30 FC!³¹ During 1936, a punitive police post was located on Dhudial village in the Jhelum District in consequence of the serious communal riots in January 1936. By the end of 1937, there were seven posts: 1 SI, 7 ASI, and 103 FC.

²⁷ *PARP*, 1933, pp.17-18

²⁸ For individual village names, and economic burden on each village see the statement, pp.XXVI-XXXI in *PLAD*. Appendix to Vol. I-V, Part A, 17 June 1937-21 July 1938, Lahore, 1939, pp.XLII-XIV

²⁹ *PARP*, p.1933

³⁰ *PARP*, 1933, p.6

³¹ *PARP*, 1935, p.18

Again with the beginning of the World War II and subsequent Quit India Movement the number of punitive police posts increased. During the World War II, the punitive police was used as a practice to control the communist propoganda and activities. The chief official reasons given for the imposition of punitive police was growing lawlessness and criminal activities of the villagers but political reasons underlying these punitive measures were implicit in it. For instance in the case of village Jandiala, police station Nurpur, District Jullundur a punitive police was imposed in 1940. The appeal made by the villagers to the Deputy Commissioner of Jullundur against this punitive measure included a shift in the ideological stance of the communist party. This was given as the chief justification for the withdrawal of the post. They argued that they were now ready to help the local authorities and there was no necessity of extra police on account of the change of policy of Communist Party and that the villagers should not be burdened with such cost.³²

The Akali Movement and the Police

The Akali movement was led by the Akalis to wrest the control of Sikh religious shrines from *Mahants* (hereditary officiates) and *sarbarah* (appointed managers). The Akalis accused these *mahants* for not following the orthodox Sikh practices and introducing corrupt practices in the shrines.³³ By the early twentieth century, the Sikh reformist institutions such as the Singh Sabhas and the Chief Khalsa Diwan, were at the forefront for reforming the Sikh Gurudwaras. The reformation of Gurudwaras was a part of overall Sikh reformist movement. However, initially the activities for the reforms of Gurudwaras were restricted to moderate practices such as petitioning to the government, boycott of Gurudwaras, and legal cases against the *mahants* etc. These methods did not yield major results. The disillusionment with

³² *PLAD*, 26 October- 10 November, 1942, Vol. XX, pp.42-43

³³ Richard G. Fox, *Lions of the Punjab: Culture in the making*, University of California Press, Berkley, p. 82

the old methods of agitation led to the introduction of a new strategy for protest. The reformists started organising themselves in non-violent Akali Jathas or bands. In the beginning, the Akali Jathas were local affairs, organised in their respective areas, and there was no centralised control over them. In November 1920, the Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) came into existence. It was an elected body of the Sikhs to lead the Akali movement. In between 1920-1925, three hundred large and small Gurudwaras were liberated by the Akalis.³⁴

The Akali Movement, also called 'the Third Sikh War' was in one respect unique from all other anti-colonial political movements of its times. It was a 'rural' based movement, as Richard G. Fox, observed: "The Third Sikh War...rallied rural cultivators to perhaps the largest and longest mass protest against colonial rule in India".³⁵ The cadre, the leadership, the base, and the agitation itself were concentrated mostly in rural areas than urban cities and towns. The 'policing' of such an intensively rural based anti-colonial movement was almost a new challenge for the colonial state. In February 1922, at the height of the agitation, V.W. Smith, a police superintendent of the Punjab Criminal Intelligence Department noted:

"The Akali movement likely to be a cause of much greater concern and anxiety than the civil disobedience campaign instituted by Mr. Gandhi...Gandhi's propaganda makes its appeal to the urban classes, which lack both stamina and physical courage to oppose successfully even small bodies of police; the Akali campaign is essentially a rural movement, and its followers are men of fine physique with a national history of which the martial characteristics have been purposefully kept alive both by the government and the Sikhs themselves."³⁶

In contrast, the Gandhian, non-cooperation and the Khilafat agitation was restricted to the urban areas of the Punjab. The efforts were made to spread the movement to the rural areas but it remained restricted to the urban areas.³⁷ The non-cooperation movement was

³⁴ Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1978, pp.18-19

³⁵ Richard G. Fox, *Lions of the Punjab: Culture in the making*, University of California Press, Berkley, p. 79

³⁶ Quoted in Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government, and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, Sage, New Delhi, 2005, p.188

³⁷ *FRP*, 31 January 1922, January 1922/18, NAI, GOI, p.79

relatively much weaker than the last Rowlatt agitation in urban areas of the Punjab.³⁸ In a way, the Akali movement posed a new challenge before the colonial state as in the earlier period, almost all major mass movements were concentrated in the urban areas. Secondly, the state was caught in another dilemma. In the wake of the Jalliawala Bagh incident, the deployment of the army in the management of internal order considerably declined in the official policy. Therefore, it was predominantly police and not the army which dealt with Akali movement. The government kept the use of the use of brutal force at minimal. As Sir John Maynard mentioned in the legislative council on 1 August 1922: "...military force has not been used to disperse any assembly during the period [from 1 May 1921 to 30 April 1922]... In the few cases in which troops have been present, they have been held in reserve to assist the police, if necessary, and their actual intervention has not been called for".³⁹

During the Akali movement careful instruction were issued to the police regarding the use of force. It was recommended that the first step before the use of actual physical force was to 'try the effect of local men of influence or responsible passers-by to persuade the crowd to disperse'. In case the first step failed the second step included 'to separate real offenders from casual on-lookers'. The use of police force was stratified in a planned manner. For instance it was instructed that the police force employed in dispersal should be divided into three portions. The first to be employed with short light sticks for dispersal. The second squad, armed with lathis was to be employed in the support of the first squad, if need arose. The third body, armed with muskets, was to be employed in case of emergency.⁴⁰

The minimum use of force had also become imperative due to military factors. The British Indian army had a large presence of the Sikhs. In 1920, one in every fourteen adult

³⁸ The non-cooperation movement was launched by Gandhi on 1 August 1920. In December 1920, the Congress passed the non-cooperation resolution in the annual session held at Nagpur. In Punjab, the non-cooperation movement was restricted to urban areas and was relatively weak than Rowlatt agitation of 1919. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India, 1885-1947*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1983, p.210

³⁹ *PLCD*, 31 July 1922-23 March 1923, Vol. IV, Lahore, 1923, p.69

⁴⁰ *PLCD*, 31 July 1922, 23 March 1923, Vol IV, Lahore, 1923, p.70

Sikh males in the Punjab was in army. This made the community a particularly potent danger if provoked into open rebellion against the authorities. The central districts affected by the Akali movement were also the recruitment zone for the British. The excessive force could easily lead to unrest among the Sikhs in the army. According to the government reports, more than seventy per cent of Akali volunteers in the districts of central Punjab were Jat Sikhs. The Jat Sikhs had constituted almost exclusively the Sikh element in Punjab regiments of the Indian Army since the 1860's.⁴¹

On 20 March 1922, an extensive operation aimed at suppressing Sikh political activities was started simultaneously in the thirteen Sikh majority districts. The Government decided to use the police and not the troops so that there was no danger of excessive force being used against the Sikhs. Districts officers were instructed to use as little force as possible while breaking up bands marching about the country in military formation.

During the movement, the Punjab Government decided against calling in the army to deal with the militant Sikhs. The government was aware that a full scale repression of the Akalis could precipitate a terrible backlash from the Sikhs. Furthermore, repressive military action on the movement would permanently alienate the Sikhs in the Punjab and lose for the army an important source of recruits from the districts of the central Punjab.⁴²

In spite of this, there were moments when army was called. In Amritsar, during the Akali Movement, the Golden Temple, not very far away from the Jalliawalan Bagh had become an epicentre of major political activities. The suspicious government kept an eye on activities in the temple. In July 1921, the SGPC gave a call for the cleaning of the holy tank at the Golden Temple. There was a general popular superstition that cleaning of the tank meant a change of the ruling government. However, the periodical cleaning was essential to

⁴¹ The paragraph based on Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government, and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, Sage, New Delhi, 2005, p.188

⁴² See Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government, and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, Sage, New Delhi, 2005, p.219

prevent the chocking of the water due to silt. The government attitude to call for cleaning of the tank was fraught with suspicion; it was a mixture of suspicion and pragmatism.⁴³

In June 1923, the SGPC, finally gave a call for the cleaning of the holy tank on 17 June. The Sikh devotees considered the cleaning of the tank as an auspicious service to gain religious merit. It was estimated that about two lakh people will gather on 17 June in Amritsar. On 17th June, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar monitored the temple from a 'clock tower' along with other officials. He observed no signs of 'animus' or 'fanaticism' in the Sikh gathering. The civil government, particularly the Deputy Commissioner, was astounded, when they noticed the entry of one Company Indian Infantry, ½ Squadron Indian Cavalry, and one Section armoured corps in the city. The Deputy Commissioner had no prior information of the coming of the army. Sir, C.W. Jacob, Chief of the General Staff of Northern Army Head Quarters, Simla, had sent this force. He was in favour of a 'military action' in the event of any serious disturbance taking place.⁴⁴ The Punjab government seriously warned C.W. Jacob, that in future no troops should be sent without consultation with the local Government.⁴⁵

Similarly, troops were employed on large religious gatherings. The government viewed large public gatherings with suspicions. There was a big fair at Anandpur in the Hoshiapur District on 13th and 14th of April of 1921. The Anandpur had an important place in the Sikh religious tradition. The government sent a contingent of troops at Anandpur to deal with the situation.⁴⁶ In March 1921, troops were deployed during the Muktsar fair where a

⁴³ *FRP*, 15 July 1921, Home (political), September 1921/I(Deposit), GOI, NAI, p.17

⁴⁴ 'Report regarding the opening day of the Kar Seva ceremony at Amritsar', Home (political), 1923/191, GOI, NAI, p.2

⁴⁵ In a letter dated 2 July 1923, see 'Report regarding the opening day of the Kar Seva ceremony at Amritsar', Home (political), 1923/191, GOI, NAI, p.12

⁴⁶ *FRP*, 15 April 1921, Home (political), June 1921/15 (Deposit), GOI, NAI, p.10

Sikh religious congregation had gathered.⁴⁷ The government suspected religious gatherings for carrying seeds of rebellion and spreading sedition.

The troops were supplied wherever the presence of the police was precarious. By early 1922, the SGPC had lost control in many cases on the Akali volunteers. This alarmed the government. In few cases, the Akali leaders were arrested in Hoshiarpur district in the presence of the troops. The troops were employed to deal with the truculent bands while the police was exhausted by the political work. In February 1922, the Prince of Wales visited the Punjab. A large number of police was put on security arrangements for the Prince thereby removing them from the political scene.⁴⁸

In early 1922, the government made special efforts to increase the number of police. In January 1922, an additional armed police consisting of 1250 men was sanctioned. The instructions were issued to the District Superintendents to enrol more men to fulfil the first Reserves of their districts up to their full strength. These reserves were seriously depleted by the extra duties. The number of the additional police had increased to 2750 constables by 15 February 1922. It was expected that the number of additional police will further increase, if the situation did not improve.⁴⁹ However, the strength of the police was not sufficient to deal with all political activities. Therefore, in March 1922, the government stationed small detachments of troops in each of the thirteen districts affected by the Akali movement. The arrest of the prominent leaders took place on 20 March 1922.⁵⁰ The arrest of the prominent Akali leaders was expected to cause disturbances in the Punjab countryside. The troops were employed to deal with any exigency arising out of the arrest of Akali leaders. The situation remained under control and by 9 April 1922, the government withdrew all troops where they

⁴⁷ *FRP*, 31 March 1921, Home (political), June 1921, No. 45, NAI, GOI, p.2

⁴⁸ *FRP*, 28 February 1922, February 1922/18, GOI, NAI, pp.57-58

⁴⁹ *FPR*, 15 February 1922/18, GOI, NAI, p. 11

⁵⁰ *FRP*, 31 March 1922, March 1922/18, GOI, NAI, p.46

were not permanently stationed. In contrast, the government maintained the parties of the additional police to strengthen the regular police.⁵¹

In the 1920's, with the coming of Akali movement, punitive police was imposed in a large number of villages. The British often used the threat of punitive police posts to chastise villages involved with the Akali unrest.⁵² As a contemporary, Sardar Tara Singh said: "...it is [punitive police] posted with the object of destroying political movements or any other popular movement in which people are interested, like the Akali movement...if, we persue [sic. pursue] the names of the villages where this punitive police is posted, it will be seen that they are almost all situated in Sikh districts and especially in those parts where Akali movement has been rather strong."⁵³ As the Akali movement got momentum, a crop of punitive police posts sprang up in the Punjab. Apparently the purpose of the punitive police posts was not to check crime but to punish those subjects holding sympathetic view point on Non-Cooperation Movement or the Akali Movment. In other words the imposition of the punitive police was a disciplining or a corrective measure. As one Gurbaksh Singh said in the provincial Legislative Council: "I personally know a number of cases where punitive police posts were sanctioned simply because a particular village was of extreme political bent of mind or was taking keen interest in the gurudwara reform movement..."⁵⁴

In number of villages in Lyallpur District, from where Akalis hailed, many penal or punitive posts were established.⁵⁵ In 1922, punitive police post was imposed in ten villages of District Ferozpur, Apart from the usual law and order complaints these villages were known for their political activities. A large number of political meetings were held in these

⁵¹ *FRP*, 15 April 1922, April 1922/18, GOI, NAI, p.12

⁵² Richard G. Fox, *Lions of the Punjab*, p. 91 & p.95

⁵³ *PLCD*, Vol. III, No. 12, 16 March 1925, Lahore, 1925, pp.583-84

⁵⁴ *PLCD*, Vol. III, No. 12, 16 March 1925, Lahore, 1925, p.590

⁵⁵ *PLCD*, Vol. IV, 31 July 1922-22 March 1923, Lahore, 1923, p.264

villages.⁵⁶ By November 1922, there were 57 cases of punitive police in the province. In almost all these cases, the punitive police post was not of a very long standing but was imposed during 1921-22. It suggests the political angle involved in these cases. In some cases the annual burden was as high as Rs. 7 per person.⁵⁷

In public, the government did not accept sedition as responsible for the imposition of the punitive police posts. The government argued that the usual crime was responsible for imposition of punitive police and the imposition of punitive police had no political implications.⁵⁸ In secret correspondence, the government maintained the political role of the punitive police posts. It was reported: "speaking generally, a wholesome fear of the law exists now and the imposition of punitive police posts has been found to be a most effective means of dealing with villages in which contempt for authority had sprung up".⁵⁹ The government promptly dealt with any seditious activities. For instance, in Lahore district on village refused to pay the land revenue. The administration resorted to immediate suppression: "It has been necessary to send out 150 Police with two British Officers to one notorious village to assist the Tahsildar in collecting land revenue and other dues and nine ringleaders have been arrested".⁶⁰ The government collected punitive police costs with utmost urgency. It was regretted that the political value of a punitive police post was lost if the punitive tax was not immediately realised. As one contemporary report mentions: "Excellent results were obtained by a police raid conducted by the Deputy Commissioner of Lahore on a *Manjha* village in a remote corner of the district: and practically the whole of a sum of Rs. 11,000 which was due for punitive police was recovered, after the people had declared their intention of not

⁵⁶ For the names of these villages and details see, *PLCD*, 31 July 1922-23 March 1923, Vol. IV, p. 171

⁵⁷ See the case of village Vehgal, District Lahore, a punitive police was imposed there on 28 April 1922. For details see, *PLCD*, 31 July-23 March, Vol. IV, Lahore, 1923, pp. 704-769

⁵⁸ For official response see, *PLCD*, Vol. III, No. 12, 16 March 1925, Lahore, 1925, p. 587

⁵⁹ *FRP*, 15 July 1922, Home (political), August 1922/18, NAI, GOI, p. 11

⁶⁰ *FRP*, 15 July 1922, Home (political), August 1922/18, NAI, GOI, p. 11

paying.”⁶¹ In another intelligence report, the effect of the location of punitive police posts on certain offending villages was reported to be ‘excellent’.⁶²

The SGPC in resented the imposition of the punitive police posts and in a number of *communiqués* charged government for repression. In Ferozpur district, it was reported, the cost for the most of the punitive police posts was paid by the SGPC out of the incomes of the land attached to the Nanakana Sahib shrine.⁶³

In most of the cases it was very difficult to draw a line between the political and ordinary crime. The Akalis were treated at par with the habitual criminals, as one contemporary said: “on several villages, which were predominantly Sikh, punitive police posts were imposed and the Akalis were made to pay the same tax as badmashes”.⁶⁴ For instance, at a village Hudiara in Lahore District, the punitive tax was realised at the rate of Rs. 1 per village menial, Rs. 2 per tenant, Rs. 3 per land holder, Rs. 30 from previous convicts of persons entered in Register No.9 and Rs. 40 from badmashes of the Register No. 10. Interestingly, the Akalis, Congressmen and members of the Panchayat were also charged Rs 40 per person.⁶⁵ The punitive police was also accompanied by the *zulm* of the police. During the Akali Movement, a punitive police was imposed in a village called Sabraon, The inhabitants of the village made appeals for their inability to pay the punitive tax due to their poverty. However, the collections were made forcibly, the village was surrounded, and the inhabitants were beaten and humiliated. Almost nine Sikhs of the village refused to pay, eight of them were sentenced each to two years of rigorous imprisonment.⁶⁶ In some cases the government itself accepted the political dissent a crucial factor. In a village called Dhudial,

⁶¹ *FRP*, 15 March 1922, March 1922/18, NAI, GOI, p.9

⁶² *FPR*, 31 March 1922, March 1922/18, NAI, GOI, p.46

⁶³ *FRP*, 15 April 1922, April 1922/18, NAI, GOI, p.12

⁶⁴ Ruchi Ram Sahni, *The Gurudwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, 1922, n.d, p.391

⁶⁵ Also see the case of village Ghawind of Lahore District. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *The Gurudwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, 1922, n.d, pp.391-392

⁶⁶ Ruchi Ram Sahni, *The Gurudwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, 1922, n.d, p.371

Thasil, Chakwal, District Jhelum, a punitive police was imposed in 1922. It was officially argued that apart from the “ordinary” crime, the reasons for the imposition of the punitive police included “defiance of authority by Akalis, intimidation of loyalists and attacks on them”.⁶⁷

In many cases, the punitive police was imposed on communal lines. In the last case, only Sikhs and Hindus were held responsible for the payment of punitive police while Muslim inhabitants were considered as peaceful and loyalists. This was most probable in cases of dissent and sedition. Most often only one community that is either non-Muslims or Muslims were held responsible for the cost of punitive police post. Similarly a punitive police post was imposed in the village Bajwara of Hoshiarpur District. Only Hindus of the village were held responsible for the cost of punitive police imposed in Bajwara. The Government accused Hindus of the village for ‘fomenting disorder both in the village and in the town of Hoshiarpur. In one instance, it was alleged, the Hindus of Bajwara invited anti-Government propagandists to a conference in the village which led to speeches inciting Sikhs to violence against Government’. Interestingly, Sikhs were spared from this punishment.⁶⁸

The Akalis and non-cooperators made serious efforts to undermine the loyalty of the Police. It was a serious time for the already over-strained police due to political agitation in the province. The persuasion to resign from military and police was often accompanied by the threats.⁶⁹ The *Bande Matram* and the *Partap* made persistent efforts on the loyalty of the natives in the police and the army. In January 1922, *Bande Matram* published a poem declaring service in the Police and Army as unlawful. The *Siyasat*, another newspaper, published a *fatwa* declaring it unlawful for Muslims to serve in the British Government.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *PLCD*, 31 July-3 August, 1922, Vol. IV, No.1, Lahore, 1922, p. 381

⁶⁸ *PLCD*, 31 July-23 March 1923, Vol. IV, Lahore, 1923, p. 133

⁶⁹ *FRP*, 15 January 1922, Home(political), January 1922/18, NAI, GOI, pp.5-6

⁷⁰ *FRP*, 15 January 1922, Home(political), January 1922/18, NAI, GOI, p.7

Around twenty one government servants resigned during the last half of the January 1922, allegedly on religious or political reasons.⁷¹

The Vicarious Punishment: A popular criticism

During 1920's and 1930's, there was a popular resentment against the institution of the punitive police. The members of the Legislative Council of the Punjab criticised punitive police on many grounds. According to the critics, the punitive police was not a representative of the shared criminality of a village but the failure of the police to deal with the individual criminals. It was alleged that it was the inability of police to deal with individual criminals which, often invited the invocation of punitive police posts. As Chhotu Ram (later on Sir Chhotu Ram), once said in the Legislative Council: "It is a duty of the people to help the police but sometimes it is the inefficiency of the police itself responsible for the said situation".⁷² The punitive police also did not discriminate among the individuals. It was a blanket punishment. Chhotu Ram in a speech in the Legislative Council captured the essence of the principle of punitive police. According to him the practice of quartering of punitive police was a 'vicarious punishment', a 'vicious principle', to punish people for offences

⁷¹ *FRP*, 31 January 1922, Home(political), January 1922/18, NAI, GOI, p.80

⁷² *PLCD*, 26 June-21 December 1934, Vol. XXV, Lahore, 1935, pp.502-03. For instance, a punitive police was imposed at villages of Pindi Bhattian, Jalalpur Bhattian and Kasise in the Hafizabad Tahsil of District Gujranwala from 15 March 1919 to 1 January 1921. The official explanation for this measure identified not only lawlessness of these villages but impotency of the government: "the general lawlessness in these villages largely due to habits of cattle lifting and traffic in stolen cattle and the impossibility of dealing with the offenders in Courts of law. Judicial conviction was made impossible by the general screening of offenders." see *PLCD*, 25 July-10 November, 1921, Vol. II, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1921, p.8. In fact in many cases, the police itself was involved in supporting the criminals. In 1934, a dacoit, Mugla was notorious for criminal activities in Rohtak District. The government itself admitted that the police officers in the Rohtak district believed that the information of the official activities for the arrest of Mugla passed to him through some members of the police force and certain action was taken against police officers suspected in this connection. At least two foot constables were dismissed and one was discharged on the pretext of inefficiency in the matter of arrest of Mugla. *PLCD*, 24 June-21 December 1934, Vol XXV, Lahore, 1935, pp. 726-728

which had not been committed by them.⁷³ In few cases, the punitive police was imposed when the actual pretext for the imposition of the punitive police no more existed.⁷⁴ Further, it was argued that in principle, the procedure for establishing the punitive police was authoritarian in character. It gave no representation to the inhabitants in the decision making. In case of imposition of the punitive police, the inhabitants were not given a chance to defend themselves. In many cases, the inhabitants were made acquainted with the imposition of punitive police on their village, only through press announcements that to post-decision.⁷⁵ The punitive police was understood as a regressive punishment. For instance, during the year 1942-43 and 1943-44, Rs. 3,08, 525 were realised from a single district of Ferozpur. This sum was recovered by imposing 22 punitive police posts. In some cases the burden was as high as Rs. 75 a year per person.⁷⁶ In case the individuals failed to pay the punitive tax, the payment was realised by the sale of moveable property and belongings.⁷⁷ Those who never lived in the village even they were forced to pay for the punitive police post.⁷⁸ It was argued, the imposition of punitive police in an area invited an intense policing and 'wrath' of the

⁷³ *PLCD*, 26 June-21 December 1934, Vol. XXV, Lahore, 1935, pp.502-03

⁷⁴ For instance, in 1934, a dacoit called Mugla started a wave of criminal activities in the Rohtak district. There were no less than 25 cases of murder against Mugla. A punitive police was imposed in October 1934 on 34 villages of the Rohtak district, at an annual cost of Rs. 73,000, primarily due to activities of Mugla. The irony was Mugla was arrested in May 1934, and was tried and hanged on 25 September 1934, while punitive police was imposed in October 1934! *PLCD*, 24 June-21 December 1934, Vol. XXV, Lahore, 1935, pp.518-519 & p.572

⁷⁵ *PLCD*, 25 February-25 March, Vol. XVIII, Lahore, 1931, p.515

⁷⁶ See the case of Chak No. 275, District Lyallpur, a punitive police post was imposed from 1 November 1915-29 February 1920. *PLCD*, Vol. IV, 1922-23, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1923, p.1145

⁷⁷ It was how colonial police most of the times realised its punitive fines. As a policy of Indian National Congress, the Congress workers often refused to pay the fines and the sum was realised by the sale of their property by the police. This is what Jawaharlal Nehru captured and its impact on his daughter Indira: "It was the Congress policy not to pay fines. So the police came day after day and attached and carried away furniture. Indira, my four years old daughter, was greatly annoyed at this continuous process of despoliation and protested to the police and expressed strong displeasure. I am afraid those early impressions are likely to colour her future views about police force generally." See J.S. Bright, *Indira Gandhi*, A New Light Publication, New Delhi, 1971, p.58

⁷⁸ Such was the case of Mr. Wazir Singh, Indian Railway Service of Engineers, N.W. Railways, New Delhi. In June 1934, a punitive police post was imposed on Pundri village of Karnal District. Wazir Singh owned some immovable property at Pundri, but had not resided there during the last thirty years. In this regard he made a representation to District Magistrate, Karnal. Further Wazir Singh's official residence, as noted in his service book was in District Hissar. The pleas was rejected and he was not exempted from the punitive tax. Other Government servants who were owning some property in Pundri but were not residing there were also assessed for the punitive post. *PLCD*, 21 February-29 March, 1935, Vol. XXVI, Lahore, 1935, p.455

state. For instance, in April 1939, a punitive police post was imposed in village Chandi, tahsil Gohana, District Rohtak. At the time of the imposition of the punitive police there were 75 bad characters in the village, by 1 December 1941, the number had grown up to 97. Almost 20 searches were made in the village from 1 April 1939 to 1 December 1941. During this period 16 people were challaned under various acts and as result nine persons were convicted. Apart from this sixteen serious cases of dacoity and were traced to this village, for which 27 persons were challaned and out of which 23 were either discharged or acquitted and five were convicted.⁷⁹ The imposition of the punitive police had greater social consequences for the inhabitants of a village. The imposition of the punitive police gave a bad name to the village, in fact it was understood as a 'bad' or 'criminal village'. Undoubtedly, it had the consequences on the social lives of the inhabitants of these villages even after the removal of the post. The inhabitants of the village were understood as habitual offenders. As one contemporary, Chaudhari Afzal Haq observed: "...the idea that the villagers of that place are habitual offenders would them would out live even if the punitive police is removed...law takes every person to be innocent unless he is proved guilty. But he imposition of punitive police quite reverses the meaning of law, that is every person can be declared guilty unless he proves himself not guilty..."⁸⁰

Conclusion

From the sources, it appears that the colonial state was more comfortable, confident, and at ease when it was pitted against a communal unit; individuals often exhausted the colonial claim of power and authority. In other words, it was much easier to identify,

⁷⁹ As one contemporary said: "people were confined to their shops or houses until they met the demands of the police and even the minors did not escape the imposition of the tax for the maintenance of the punitive police... the inhabitants were terrorised and humiliated, the beatings and extortions were common". *PLCD*, 16 March 1925, Vol. VIII, Lahore, 1925, p.593

⁸⁰ He was representative from Hoshiarpur-cum-Ludhiana, Rural in the Legislative Council. See *PLCD*, 16 March 1925, Vol. VIII, No.12, Lahore, 1925, pp.580-81

prosecute and punish a village rather than a single individual. In case of a village there was no need to frame detailed charges, no prosecution, and no defence, as Sir Henry Craik said: “Additional Police are not located as a result of detailed charges. They are located on account of the dangerous or the disturbed state of an area”.⁸¹

The punitive police was an important institution which aided the regular police in dealing with the major disturbances. The use of punitive police was restricted to deal with political crime. The imposition of the punitive police had a deterrent effect and it was successful against sedition. However such practices were useful only during the normal circumstances. It was of no use during the partition violence.

The case study of the Akali movement, suggests that troops were still used in dealing with the Akali movement but more cautiously. The force was used more prudently during the Akali movement. The punitive police could easily chastise the rebellious villages.

⁸¹ *PLCD*, 25 February-10 May 1932, Vol. XXI, Lahore, 1932, p.151

Conclusion

The present study suggest us that we need to re-think of the role of 'models' in the coming up of the police forces in the sub-continent. It is believed that the Police Act of 1861 was based on the Sir Charles Napier's Sind model and in turn on the Royal Irish Constabulary model of Ireland. The present study suggests that this was not the case. The structure of the police force in the sub-continent was shaped more by the local circumstances than the Royal Irish Constabulary model of Ireland. The structure and character of the police forces in the sub-continent varied from one place to the other. The local circumstances and strategic considerations played an important role in this regard. By the end of the nineteenth century, the location of the Punjab in the north-west frontier of the British dominion gave a quasi-military character to the police force of the Punjab. However this was not the case in the beginning. It was only the perceived threat of the Russian advance which led to the militarization of the police force of the province.

In the beginning, the mutiny of 1857 and future threats of a police mutiny were important considerations. In contrast, the conventional historiography has underplayed the role of mutiny in shaping the history of the police forces. The Indian Police Commission of 1860 was a direct outcome of the mutiny of 1857. In 1861, the Police Act of 1861, organised the police forces in the provinces probably on the principles of the Royal Irish Constabulary model. However, the principles were not followed in practice. As a result, in next two decades a large number of reductions in the strength of the police forces took place. The police were kept at a distance from sophisticated arms and training in use of arms. The military elements such as military officers were successively removed from the police forces. The rebellious communities, such as Kukas in the Punjab were dismissed from the police to

subvert the possibility of any mutiny in the police. Further the composition of the police forces was reached in such a manner to restraint the possibility of any mutiny in the police. All these reductions and preventive measures created a police force in the province which was in all probably only a caricature of Royal Irish Constabulary model. The imitation of Royal Irish Constabulary model in India was neither warranted nor executed. The circumstances and political requirements of Ireland differed from colonial India.

In early 1870's and 1880's the policy of keeping the police forces aloof from military discipline, arms, and training underwent a reversal. The Russian advance in the north-west of British Empire led to re-consideration of the role of police forces in the sub-continent. The mobilisation of the resources and maintenance of internal peace and order at the time of war justified a well armed disciplined police force. The police establishment in the Punjab underwent significant modifications. This gave a quasi-military character to the police force of the Punjab. Even then the lack of resources and will created a poorly armed police force. The service conditions of constabulary remained deplorable throughout the nineteenth century.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the role of the police forces in the sub-continent was again re-considered. The constitution of Indian Police Commission of 1902 was a major step in this regard. Accordingly, in 1910's there was a significant increase in the expenditure of the police. In contrast the service conditions of constabulary remained neglected.

The most important development in the twentieth century from the point of view of the emergence of police in the Punjab was the imitation of martial race theory in the police. This led to the recruitment of police on the same pattern as army did. Over time, it led to a competition with army. The pay prospects of the soldiers in the army were more attractive

than the police service of the province. Therefore, it became increasingly difficult for the police to secure the 'martial' recruits. During the Great War time, a large number of police of the province abandoned police in favour of the Indian army. It remained a major problem of the police department to keep the men within the force. In the normal times, the agriculture and epidemics like plague played an important role in determining the strength of the force. The 'favourable agricultural conditions' and scarcity of agricultural labour during epidemics were major pull factors for men serving in the police.

The constabulary in the Punjab was not only least paid but also the least qualified. The literacy and educational backgrounds of the recruits were not a serious consideration during the colonial rule. This created an advantage for the Muslim population of the province. In the Punjab, the Muslims were educationally and economically backward. However, the Hindus of the province dominated in services, trade and industry. The Hindus, mainly based in urban areas, were also the most literate religious community in the Punjab. However, it was of no consequence for the police recruitment where literacy was no criteria rather preference was given to the rural agricultural population. The north western districts of the Punjab, with a Muslim majority population, were the best recruiting districts for the police. In contrast the Hindus and Sikhs were not easily available in the central and south-eastern districts. The Hindus were satisfactorily available only in less fertile hilly districts of Kangra and Hoshiarpur. All this led to the preponderance of Muslims in the province of the Punjab.

In early twentieth century communalism developed in Punjab. The nature of the communalism was to secure more and more representation of the population of their respective religious communities in the services and representative bodies. This antagonised the relationship among Hindus and Muslims. The Muslims remained a majority in the police constabulary while Hindus dominated other important departments of administration. The

Hindu communalists challenged the preponderance of Muslims in the police. They devised an argument according to which all evils in the police department were due to Muslim preponderance. Significantly, the police had Muslim majority since 1871, but it was only during the early twentieth century that it became a problem. Further it was added that Hindus were suffering in the hands of Muslim police. In this communalised environment, the police force also got entangled. In the communal riots of 1920's, the police had lost public faith and both Hindus and Muslims considered police as a communal and partisan force. The communal character of the police was a part of wider socio-political developments in the Punjab. However, the preponderance of Muslims in the police was chiefly due to economic reasons. Importantly, the Hindu communalists succeeded in developing a relationship between the 'Muslim preponderance' and 'communal character of the force'. By the time of the partition, Muslims remained in majority in the police force. In the partition violence, Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim police alike took part in abetting the violence. On the Indian side the testimonies of the victims blamed Muslim police in indulging into the violence. The non-Muslim leaders repeated the Muslim majority of the police as major reason for the partisan character of the police. The subsequent historians of the partition repeated the same arguments. When they did that they did not realise that they were parroting the Hindu communalists of early twentieth century.

Apart from the communal politics, the large scale recruitment of Punjabis in the Indian army created a unique situation for the police. On the one hand, the ex-soldiers were recruited in large numbers by the police. On the other hand, the ex-soldiers were the major trouble makers during the political agitations for instance in the Sikh temple reform movement also called the Akali movement (1920-25). The military deserters and demobilised soldiers also indulged into violent crime such as armed dacoity. In the last

decades of the raj, the nature of crime underwent significant changes due to militarised character of society. However, the last formulation requires a further study.

In this light, it is important to understand how the Punjab society was policed. It is argued by some historians that the role of army considerably declined after Jallianwala Bagh incident. In the Punjab, the Akali movement was most important movement after the 1919 disturbances. The Akali movement was led by the rural Jat Sikhs. The involvement of the Jat Sikhs led to the careful handling of the movement. The deployment of army was kept at minimal. It is argued that the punitive police posts were used to chastise the villages. However, in disagreement with the existing historiography, it is found that the troops were also used on number of occasions.

In the end, it is hoped that the present monograph will add to the existing knowledge on the colonial police. The present work does not claim any authority rather the effort is to re-think the history of the colonial police. At present, few issues have been identified and it is expected that these issues will be explored in greater details in the future course of research.

Appendices

Appendix I

Statement showing strength and cost of police in the Punjab, 1900-1944

YEAR	TOTAL STRENGTH	COST (Rupees)	NO OF POLICE STATIONS	NO OF OUTPOSTS	PROPORTION OF POLICE TO AREA (per sq mile)	PROPORTION OF POLICE TO POPULATION	ANNUAL RESIGNATIONS
1900	20,458	3701499			5.4	1019	691(old province)
1901	17876	3467663			4.9	1136	715
1902	18275	3238932			5.3	1112	700
1903	18586	3045350			5.2	1093	738
1904	19100	3339249			5	1064	1016
1905	20120	3740189			4.8	1016	1039
1906	20289	4496616			4.8	1002	770
1907	20508	4878719			5.1	1083	1028
1908	21080	4952102			4.9	1038	936
1909	21122	5092633			4.9	1034	1094
1910		5357297					936
1911		5560725					691
1912	21457	5527904	474	191	6	1087	592
1913	20494	5593495	472	190	5	1046	622
1914	20890	5849924	476	192	6	1032	599
1915	20896	6265,893	476	191	5	1016	887
1916	20176	6274080	475	225	5	1059	961
1917		6179101					735
1918		6565687					987
1919		7823744					824
1920		9536612					679
1921	20341	9411108	472	164	5.1	1085	473
1922		11507213					580
1923		10666404					668
1924		10370691					594
1925	21154	10179575	475	165	4.9	1057	548
1926	21179	10202652	478	160	4.9	1056	459
1927	21243	9925247	478	173	4.9	1053	427
1928	22327	11111693	490	169	4.7	999	489
1929		11720571					452
1930	22800	12610602	495	176	4.6	986	327
1931		12230067					175
1932	22770	11790996	494	183	4.3	1035	124
1933	22739	11719018	494	184	4.2	1036	128
1934		11714286					120
1935	22717	11736636	485	183	4.3	1036	135
1936	22757	12069781	493	184	4.6	1127	109
1937	22,962	12169404	495	187	4.5	1115	102
1938		11821016					132
1939	23189	12145544	500	184	4.1	929	131
1940	23288	13061881	500	188	4.1	1012	219
1943	24813		503	190			
1944	25534		505	190			

Note: The source for the above data is the *Annual Police Administration Reports of the Punjab* for the respective years

Appendix II

Return showing the equipment, discipline and general internal management of the police from 1921-1944

	Total Actual Strength		Armament of the force			Education		Percentage to total actual strength of		
	Officers	Men	Rifles	Smoothbores	Revolvers	Officers	Men	Admission into Hospitals	Daily Average No. of absent due to sickness	Deaths
1921	992	18651	924	9,626	874	992	6243	30.2	.5	.5
1925	1004	19869	1672	10902	897	1001	7606	33	.9	1.4
1926	1005	19899	1672	11118	892	978	8164	25.5	1.3	1
1927	1010	19922	1725	11103	890	1006	8548	34.9	1.1	
1928	1154	20642	1731	11110	956	1151	9594	21.94	2.02	1.1
1930	1347	21324	1669		1411	1344	10428	27.97	2.26	.76
1932	1331	21155	1738	11658	1482	1329	11482	33.83	1.04	.45
1933	1352	20925	1959	11435	1514	1349	11702	36.02	2.45	..
1935	1393	20925	1733	11593	1567	1392	12387	27	2.1	.49
1936	1464	20776	1792	11541	1544	1461	12893	23.3	.9	.6
1937	1505	20858	1806	11856	1591	1502	13389	22.4	1.4	.5
1939	1611	20824	2003	11838	1587	1608	14033			
1943	1822	22158	2650	11719	1683	1820	16606			
1944	2024	23697	2920	11925	1664	2024	17393			

Note: The source for the above data is the *Annual Police Administration Reports of the Punjab* for the respective years.

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