

DISCIPLINING THE MADRAS ARMY DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY'S DOMINANCE IN SOUTH INDIA

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Abstract. *In recent years, there has been a proliferation of research on the history of the colonial armies in South Asia. In fact, the very concept of the army underwent a change in the eighteenth century, when the East India Company tried to raise its own army battalions based on fixed wages and other financial entitlements. The Company's troops were no longer under the intermediary military-landed elites, as was in the Mughal period, but were placed under the direct command of European professionals, with a greater deal of expertise in modern war science. The Madras Army, for a fairly long period of time was blessed with encomiums on the part of the colonial bosses for being loyal servants of the company's administration in South India. However, it would be argued that despite retaining its docility, the Madras army revolted on many occasions in the eighteenth century, which reached a point of fruition during the Vellore Mutiny of 1805–1806. The differences in wages, social prestige, race and religion might have accentuated the acts of rebelliousness and indiscipline in the army. These stories of local mutinies often do challenge the long standing historical discourse on the Madras army, which was always looked upon as the epitome of a disciplined military tradition in the sub-continent. In this paper, it would be argued, that despite these rebellious outbursts, which were by no means a temporary phenomenon, the Madras Army remained far more loyal as compared to the other presidency armies in the nineteenth century. Possibly, this is vindicated in the behaviour of the Madras Army during the Great Revolt of 1857.*

Keywords: *English East India Company, discipline, Madras Army, offences, commanding officer, article of war, Panchayat System, sepoy.*

Introduction

The successful administration of a country or nation depends upon the efficiency and discipline of the civil and military personnel. Discipline ensures an unquestioned leadership of the government and also written obedience of the army. So a code of conduct becomes necessary for the maintenance of discipline in the army. The military code is commonly more severe than the civil one and it is also an essential one, while in the case of the common people it is enough if they follow just a civil code. This article explores the issue of discipline and punishment in maintaining the first ever army establishment in Madras Presidency in erstwhile colonial India during the years 1752 and 1860.¹ Cases of day to day dissent were comparatively rare in the Bengal Army and Bombay Army compared to the Madras Army. Though it is often argued that the Madras Army was very disciplined and obedient to their colonial bosses, in reality the other two presidency armies were not prone to that much defiance and resistance against colonial rules and regulations. If we take into account the court martial report index, it would seem that the Madras Army was more disobedient in terms of following the instructions laid out by the company's military administration in the Presidency. In this article, I will try to narrate the mechanism of discipline and punishment which was severely maintained by the army officers during their service careers in the cantonment. The other issue which will also be addressed here is whether the army officers followed any uniform code of discipline and punishment while administering the presidency armies under colonial period. Interestingly, there would be an attempt to vindicate the fact that in the name of enforcing discipline and punishment, they followed different codes of judgment in terms of native and European soldiers. Although, they apparently tried to establish the point that they followed uniform procedures related to discipline and punishment of the disobedient soldiers.

1. The Establishment of the Madras Army in the 18th Century

In the early days of the East India Company, there was no written military code or law to govern the conduct of the army and to define the offences of errant soldiers. The commanding officers had complete freedom in making laws and implementing them

1 Singh, M. P. *Indian Army under the East India Company*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 1976, p. 163. In this book the author tried to evaluate the process of discipline in a chronological way along with the system of punishment which itself was an issue of debate since it had altogether different for both the European and native officers as well as soldiers. He also mentioned that the code of conduct was somehow associated with the discipline in the army.

according to the situation. For example, kicking and abusing someone's wife, disrespect of soldiers to place of worship and absence from daily prayers were considered a serious offence. Contracting venereal diseases, resorting to gambling, getting into debt and drunkenness were also considered to be serious military offences. Any officer involved in these offences was brought to trial before a special military court called the Court of Request.²

The soldiers who were given severe punishment in Europe were acquired by means of detachment. Subsequently, military units were largely raised through the employment of undecided charters, convicts, criminals, drunkards and deserters.³ On their arrival in India, such recruits found it impossible to escape from the strict surveillance of their officers. Their insolent attitude and disobedient conduct led to their harsh and cruel treatment in India. Through a charter in 1661, the President and Council of each factory were entrusted with powers of martial law for the governance of troops, since the President was also the commander-in-chief of the forces.⁴ In earlier days, severe punishments were inflicted upon soldiers even for minor offences. Flogging and caning were the usual methods of punishment for errant soldiers and due to the severity of treatment and harshness of law, there was large-scale desertion. Therefore, such incidents led to the abolition of flogging and caning.⁵

The constitutional provision was first made for the discipline of the company's troops by an Act of the Parliament in 1754. The scope of the Act was wide enough to cover both European and Native troops, but the language of the Articles seemed to suggest that they were originally intended for Europeans only. However, in the absence of any other code, the Madras Government had no other option, but to apply only the provision made by the Act in case of the Native *sepoys*. But, there was no clearly codified law to govern the Native army.⁶

2. The Imposition of Disciplinary Regulations in the Madras Army

In 1748 Major Stringer Lawrence organized the Madras European Regiment and founded the Madras army by enlisting 2,000 *sepoys*. In 1752 a code of military law was prepared with the help of *Article of War*, then enforced in England, under the

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- 2 Cornduff, C. W. E. *Military and Cantonment Law in India*. Calcutta: Government Press, 1904, p. LXXX. This offers the full details of the military and cantonment rules and regulations during the colonial period. It is one of the best possible books that provide the various kinds of military laws against particular crimes.
 - 3 Chesney, G. T. *Indian Polity: View of the System of Administration*. London, New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894, p. 221. This book in Chapter V describes the army in India and its development under the colonial rule. It also recorded the changes that occurred frequently among the armies during that time.
 - 4 *Historical Records of the Honourable East India Company's First Madras European Regiment*. London, 1843, p. 2
 - 5 Sharma, G. *Indian Army through the Ages*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1969, p. 231.
 - 6 Auber, P. *An Analysis of the Constitution of the East India Company*. Richardson, J. M., et al. (eds.). London: Kingsbury, Parbury, and Allen, 1826, p. 457.

denomination rules dealing with Mutiny and desertion, with the sole aim of maintaining discipline in the army. During the Company's rule considered they were revised and considerably enlarged and revised. On 27 May, 1823, the newly-made manual regarded persons indulging in certain acts as offenders.⁷ It observed, "Any person who shall begin, excite, cause or join in any mutiny or sedition, in the land forces...or shall not use his utmost endeavour to suppress the same, or coming to the knowledge of any mutiny or intended mutiny, shall not without delay give information to these Commanding Officer, or shall misbehave himself before the enemy; or shall shamefully abandon or deliver up any garrison, fortress, post or guard committed to his charge, or which he shall be commanded to defend or shall compel Governor or Commanding Officer of any garrison fortress or fort to deliver up to the enemy, or to abandon the same, or shall speak or use any other means to induce such Governor or Commanding Officers or others to misbehave before the enemy, or shamefully to abandon or deliver up any garrison...at any of the Presidencies, or without the license of the Governor or Chief Commander, or shall strike or use violence against his superior officers, begin the execution of his office, or shall disobey any lawful command of his superior officer, or shall desert the said Company's service, all and every person or persons so offended in any of the matters."⁸

Soldiers who mutinied or deserted the Company's service, or were guilty of crimes and offences to the prejudice of good order and military discipline, were given exemplary punishments without much delay. For severe offences, the General or other Officer Commanding of forces in India, and also Commanders-in-Chief of respective presidencies, were authorized to convene court martial, and this power was allowed to be delegated to Majors and higher officers by the authorities concerned.

These rules and regulations were modified from time to time. From 1759-1765 many rules were framed for the effective management of the army. The rules framed for controlling mutiny and desertion was introduced in 1752. In January 1766, these rules were properly codified. Accordingly the soldiers who mutinied or deserted the army, or who were guilty of crimes, were brought into book by the court martial.⁹ The military court comprised of the commandeering chief and other commanding officers, who were also authorized to constitute it with other representations from the force. On some occasions the power was delegated to offices up to the rank of Major. The code of discipline was still not devised for the army. Consequently, the Government of Madras sent out circulars, orders, as well as regulations for the guidance of army personnel conducting court martial.¹⁰

7 Dodwell, H. Sepoy. *Recruitment in the Old Madras Army*. Calcutta: Government Press, 1922, p. 34.

8 Parliamentary Paper (Microfilm) Vol.1, p. 309, Commons 392 of 1832. Among some of the miscellaneous offences were: producing false certificates at the time of recruitment, showing larger musters than the number of men or horses actually maintained, and getting enrolled under a false name. If Paymasters or Officers of the Commissariat Department, who were required to deal with finances, provisions, forage or storage, misappropriated them, they were treated as serious offenders and they were punishable by the General Court Martial. For similar offences, offenders were more severely dealt with than soldiers or the non-commissioned officers.

9 Minute by Governor General, dated 16 February 1835, vol. 40, p. 449, No. 319 of 1836, National Archives of India, New Delhi (hereinafter – NAI).

10 Hoover, J. M. *Men without Hats*. New Delhi: Manohar, 2007, p. 107.

However, there was also another kind of court martial known as Native Court Martial. This system was more similar to the old conventional method called the *Panchayat system*, and comprised mostly of native offices. The *Panchayat system*, which operated through the village council, tried to settle disputes in the villages. In the Company's army, the natives were authorized to constitute the *Panchayat* or local court to settle disputes among them. This was popularly referred to by the European officers as Native Court Martial. The system had an unwritten sanction behind it and the natives appointed a certain member of judges from their ranks. The *Panchayat system* was very favourable and employed sometimes natives to supervise the trial of the erring soldiers. However, no native officer below the rank of *Subedar* could be its President, and no one below the rank of *Jamadar* could be a member of the native court martial.¹¹

But there were no ultimate rules guiding the *Panchayats*, other than the rules of common sense and convention.¹² This native code was constituted with the approval of the Commanding Officers for the settlement of disputes among the native *sepoys*. The Commanding Officers had enormous power and the discipline of the corps largely depended upon him. They had indeed the last word on the matter and they could do anything which they thought to be permissible. They made new laws and unmade the old laws. If need be many of the offences were dealt by him, but some offences of serious nature were referred to court martial.¹³ At the same time, the commanding officers who conducted the proceedings enjoyed a good deal of power and influence during the time of conducting the court martial. Thus, it was clear that the commanding officers enjoyed enormous power to control the army and there was no check on them.

But, it soon became evident that the commanding officers despite the powers vested on them could not always take a tough stand against the offenders. In reality, the commanding officers were not able to punish and discipline the offenders without a court martial. But, even in that case, the commanding officers as presiding officer exercised only a bit of their power and influence. Thus the commanding officers became practically ineffective.¹⁴

3. The Collaboration and Discords between the Native *Sepoys* and the English Military Officials in South India

The disciplinary standards of the Madras Army came under much admiration by Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras. It was generally believed that the native *sepoys* of the Madras Army were quiet, orderly and easily manageable. The native officers were also praised for their dutifulness. The European military officials often felt that they had

11 Wheeler, J. T. *Madras in the Olden Time*. Madras, 1861, p. 252–54.

12 Military G.O. Madras, 1806, vol. 13, dated 17th July 1806. Tamilnadu Archives (hereinafter – TNA).

13 *Ibid.*, 22 August 1806, TNA.

14 General Orders by the Commander-in-Chief of Madras Army, 13 March 1806, TNA.

a rich legacy behind them. They were seen as the representatives of the men who had lent strength to English military officials like Sir Eyre Coote, who extinguished French power in southern India, through the successful conduct of warfare in the battles of Wandiwash and Porto Novo. The courage and strength displayed by them in the war against (Mysore) Tipu Sultan at Srirangapatnam in 1799 was equally praise-worthy.

All the servants of the Company, civil or military, were liable for dismissal. The Government of India Act of 1833 explained that it shall be lawful for His Majesty, by any writing under his signed manual, to remove or dismiss any person holding any office, employment or Commission, civil or Military, under the said Company in India and to vacate any appointment or Commission, of any person to such office or employment.¹⁵

Apart from that, the native *sepoys* sincerely cooperated with their foreign masters to eliminate the recalcitrant *Poligars* in the southern provinces in 1801. Even during the Vellore Mutiny of 1806, the *sepoys* of the Madras Army still represented the “elite” of the native army. They also distinguished themselves in the battle of Assaye in 1803, in which General Arthur Wellesley defeated the Marathas. This battle has been praised as “a monument of growing glory” and also it was certainly a tribute to the Madras army.¹⁶

Similarly, at the time of great mutiny of 1857, the Madras army remained not only loyal to the government, but also took an active part in the suppression of the revolt. In spite of such record of collaboration between the *sepoys* and the European military officials, the history of the Madras army was marked by native *sepoys* mutinies. Mutiny was caused sometimes by valid reasons like non-payment of salaries and non-payment of arrears of pay, ordering troops to undertake sea voyages when the terms of enlistments did not bind them to do so, insensitivity of officers towards the religious and personal sentiments of the troops and mismanagement and failure of supply system in times of war. These were absolutely some of the causes behind the several mutinies that had taken place in India under colonial rule between 1757 and 1857. In this regard, the mode of payment was one of the important issues which itself created confusion among both the European and native soldiers and officers at the same time. While the payment was made to European troops was without delay it was not the same in the case of the natives. So in 1752, the *sepoys* at Arcot mutinied for non-payment of salaries. Then, the *sepoys* at Masulipattinam refused to perform their duty until their arrears of pay and prize money were paid. Similarly, the Mutiny of Tellichery and Vizagapattinam in 1780, the Mutiny of 1781-1784 in Nagapatnam, Trichinopoly, Madurai and Palamcottah displayed symptoms of simmering discontent prevailing within the army.

15 There are conflicting opinions on the discipline of the Company's army. Colonel Salmond, who had served the army for over a quarter of a century, had the best possible opinion in that respect. He described the discipline of the Company's armies as “perfectly good.” Another experienced officer, General Sir Robert was of the opinion that the spirit of the army had in general been everything that was desirable, but affected in small degree at different times by particular circumstances, its efficiency was equal to calls made on it. Its discipline was very good, albeit it varied from particular circumstances. Charles Napier remarked that he had seen an army better disciplined and better paid than the army of the East India Company. Here one may raise question about it. Yet, his general remark of the army under the East India Company provides an impression about the army as a unit. For more details see, Barat, A. *The Bengal Native Infantry: Its Organization and Discipline*. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962, p. 65.

16 *Ibid.*

In 1784, the Governor in Council received information from Col. Leger about the mutiny in the cavalry regiments. The mutineers were determined to go with their horses to Tipu Sultan, the foremost enemy of the company in the south, if they were not immediately paid their allowances and salary. In 1786, mutiny was also caused by arrears of pay. This was the state of affairs till 1789, when all the dues were cleared to the *sepoys*.

Interestingly, these incidents vindicated the fact that there were numbers of local mutinies which took place before the Vellore Mutiny and the colonial government suppressed them in every possible manner. The Vellore Mutiny, considerably larger than any other mutiny, took place in 1805-1806. The mutiny was sparked by the refusal of Indian troops stationed at Vellore, in May 1806, to wear new turbans issued to them. The order for the turban had been conveyed to the troops in the garrison. In May that year, one of the native infantry battalions resented the new turban as it was objectionable: firstly its shape resembled the European hat and secondly it contained a leather cockade, which was objectionable to both Hindus and Muslims. The grounds for mutiny had thus been prepared previously and dissatisfaction increased when certain alterations in dress were introduced in *sepoy* corps. The order of the Commander-in-chief dated 13th March, 1806, entailed that a soldier shall not mark his face to denote his caste, or wear earrings when dressed in uniform and that on all parades, and all duties, every *sepoys* deployed in battalions shall be clean shaven on the chin. The order also entailed that uniformity would be preserved in regard to the quantity and shape of the hair upon the upper lip, as far as practicable.¹⁷ Such orders heightened the disaffection within the Madras army, which fuelled the mutiny that spread like a wildfire throughout the premises of the Vellore Fort.

4. The Vellore Mutiny of 1805-1806 and the Rebelliousness of the Native *Sepoys*

The Vellore mutiny was the first illustration of a big revolt by the native *sepoys* against the English East India Company. The mutiny occurred during a formative stage of colonial rule in south India, particularly the transition from the pre-colonial to the colonial mode of governance. The Vellore mutiny was a multi-dimensional, but primarily a military protest against a new article of clothing. Indeed the involvement of cross-cultural exchange had come to symbolize the discontent of the Company's *sepoys*. So, the native *sepoys* encountered the British attempts to westernize the colonial military system.

The immediate cause for this mutiny was the introduction of a new turban (a head dress worn chiefly by the *sepoys* consisting of a long cloth wound around the head) and dress regulations based on the advice and superintendence of Col. Agnew, one adjutant-general and major Price, the deputy adjutant-general. The new dress regulation, issued

17 Military Department Consultation, 5 March 1806, National Archives, New Delhi.

on 13th March 1806, made the following observation: "It is ordered by the regulations that a native soldier should not mark his face to denote his caste or wear earrings, when dressed in his uniform and it is further clean shaved on the chin. It is directed also that uniformity shall as far as practicable be preserved in regard to the qualification and shape of the hair upon the lip."¹⁸

While imposing this condition very little care was taken to respect the sentiments of the native soldiers. So these stipulations were viewed as measures calculated to hurt the religious feelings of the native *sepoys* and enforce an inferior social status on them based on race colour. However, the military administration had different opinions on the matter. The military officials felt that the old turban was inconvenient and they favoured its replacement by a lighter one which would foster a better appearance for the soldier.

The new turban, as approved by Lt. General Sir J.F. Craddock, the Commander-in-Chief, was made of a broad cloth covering and iron frame with exception of a cotton tuft resembling a feather, and a leather cockade. It resembled the leather caps of the European soldiers of King's Majesty Regiments. The native *sepoys* and officers resented this new dress regulation. Both Hindus and Muslims were attached to their own customs and manners, habit and opinions. A Muslim would not shave his beard, which was commonly associated with his faith. Similarly, a caste Hindu had the habit of making his forehead to symbolise his religious sect. They were also prohibited to wear earrings.¹⁹

In view of these grievances, the new turban was considered highly objectionable for a variety of reasons. It was like a European hat and secondly, it contained a leather cockade expected to be made from the skin of cows, which was a taboo to the Hindus. In India, the hat was particularly associated with Christians who were referred to as *Topi-Wallahs* or Hat-Wearers. Consequently, the *sepoy* felt that the introduction of the new regulations was the first step to convert them into Christianity. According to the intelligence received by the C-in-C, there was a common cry that the next attempt will be to Christianise the *sepoys*. Sensing the mode despair among the *sepoys*, the C-in-C felt that there was almost universal objection to the new turban.

Secondly, the son of Tippu Sultan of Mysore is also said to have a hand in it. A conspiracy had been hatched long before the introduction of the new turban. There was a powerful group at Vellore working for the abolition of the Company's rule and restoration of the Tippu's family in the Carnatic. They were said to have induced the *sepoys* to challenge the British by refusing to wear the new turban.

The dissatisfaction of the *sepoy* was not long concealed when the orders regarding wearing the new turban came in May, 1806. The 2nd Battalion of the 4th Regiment of Native Infantry refused to wear the turban sent for their use. The rebellious *sepoys* were severely punished and it aggravated the matter further. The actions of the second battalion were followed by several other battalions who also started defying the dress regulations. The mutiny at Vellore broke out at 3 a.m. on Sunday, 10th July, 1806.²⁰

After the fight, casualties were counted and the damage was assessed. The soldiers and coolies rounded up the human corps and separated the European dead from the

18 Military Department Consultation, *supra* note 17.

19 Military Department Consultation, 24 September 1806, TNA.

20 *Ibid.*

native *sepoys* and others who had been killed. These bodies were pushed out from the fort with help of the carts to a nearby burial ground, and huge pile of burning wood was used to burn the dead and the bones and ashes were later filled in a pit. The *sepoys* killed a large number of British officers. Fifteen British officers were killed and there wounded. Eighty three British were killed and ninety four were wounded, among them fifteen died later. One European child was killed and another one was wounded. The climatic condition was quite distressing as huge pile of Indian bodies had the possibilities of diseases which could take the form of epidemics. Consequently, British ordered that the dead bodies should be disposed of as quickly as possible. However, the accurate figures of the Indians who had died remained a bone of contestation among the historians.

Nearly two *lakhs pagodas* worth of cash and goods were reported to have been destroyed and several buildings were damaged and some of them were completely destroyed. However, it was ruthlessly suppressed by the European regiment and the circle leaders behind the mutiny were sentenced to death. The battalion involved in the Mutiny of Vellore was disbanded. The sons of Tippu Sultan were transported to Bengal from Vellore Fort. Finally, the dress regulations were withdrawn in order to respect the religious sentiments of the native soldiers and the old headgear was restored.

On the 15th April 1807, the Court of Directors sent an order for the removal of Lord William Bentinck from the post of Governor and Lt. General Sir J.F. Craddock from the post of C-in-C for their inability to manage the situation. The failure of the local authorities to initiate prompt measures was viewed as a failure, because it had led to the rebellion of the company's most well-behaved and distinguished corps.

So we may conclude that the Vellore Mutiny occurred mainly due to the disrespect shown to the religious sentiments of the native soldiers. Being foreigners, the officers on the spot were unable to appreciate their religious sentiments. If only they had developed some sympathetic attitude, the British could have averted this unpleasant episode. Although, during the mutiny of 1806, the *sepoys* remained loyal and earned appreciation from their European officers. For example, Major General Macdowell once observed about the native troops: "Own native troops have been and are likely to continue to be the most faithful army in the world."

5. The Different Worlds of the Europeans and Natives in the Madras Army

The life of the European officers and the soldiers were different from the natives who occupied the ranks of the Madras Army. The natives were denied privileges whereas the European was entitled to enjoy certain privileges. The climatic conditions were much against the enforcement of military discipline among the Europeans. So, they were provided facilities in accordance with their customs which prevailed in Europe. But such privileges were not allowed to the natives under any circumstances. Until the early 19th century, the military officers of the Company had their training at the Royal Academy at Woodwick and later on at the Company's own military college

at Addiscombe. Some of the officers of the royal troops, who were purchased by their commissions and came to India, were much younger than the Company's military officers. Due to such differences there was discontent and jealousy among the European officers of the King's and Company's troops. Similarly, with regard to positions and promotions, the officers of King's Majesty's service were normally considered for distinguished posts such as Governor or C-in-C. Apart from that, the officers of the royal troops were given preferential treatment. They lived exclusively in well-furnished buildings and secured garrison settlements. In the campground, officers were lodged in comfortable bungalows. These bungalows were constructed with low *varandhas* and *tattles* (pieces) made of bamboo were hung in them to keep the buildings cool.

The British officers were allowed to use the services of their subordinates for their personal work. For example a captain in garrison had a group of 30 sergeants who stood to help him in this respect. While in the field, the captain was accompanied by 15 to 20 coolies to carry his personal belongings.

The officers spent their nights drinking and gambling. Some of them spent their leisure time in the libraries writing articles and books. Besides, some of the European officers and soldiers spent their leisure time with native women. Their children were known as Anglo-Indians. The Madras government also reserved certain posts in the Army for the Anglo-Indians later, such as drum and fife majors, trumpet majors and bugle and farrier major.

Dancing was one of the chief amusements along with riding, hunting and shooting. However, the intense heat and unhealthy climate were not suited to the Europeans. They were susceptible to many diseases like fever, dysentery inflammation and abscess of the liver. These diseases were responsible for their premature deaths. Besides, several European lost their lives due to the excessive consumption of liquor also. The unhygienic condition of the barracks in which the native soldiers were lodged also led to the spread of contagious diseases among the Europeans. However, medical facilities were of great relief to them. Venereal diseases were common among them and hospitals at certain selected military stations, called the Lock Hospitals, were where affected native women were treated. There were excellent arrangements for the evacuation of casualties of wounded in the field. Each and every European was attached to the establishment of plaques. The plaques were assigned to remove the affected soldiers or *sepoys* from the field without discomfort. There were also several praise-worthy charitable institutions to the army, like Male Orphan Asylum, the Female Orphan Asylum, the Infirmary and the Native Poor Asylum in the Madras Presidency. The asylums for the orphans were maintained at Madras for the children of both European officers and soldiers. Similarly, the native poor asylum gave relief to the native sick and poor of all classes. Medical and surgical assistance were provided to all the native sufferings from diseases.²¹

The status of native *sepoys* in the indigenous society was very high. It was a great privilege and respect for a person to be a *sepoy* in Madras Army. But, the treatment given to the natives in the army by the British officer was not very humane. Abusing and striking the native *sepoys* were common practices. The uncontrolled freedom and authority enjoyed by the Europeans in the presidency led to acts of tyranny and

21 Military Department Consultation, 6 January 1809, TNA.

suppression against the natives. The authorities were very much worried about the attitude of the officers towards the natives. It was safe for the English to rule a foreign land if the native inhabitants were respectful to them. One great means of gaining respect from the natives was to speak their language. So every officer who got commission was advised to give special attention to the learning of the native language. Hindustani was officially recognised as the *sepoy* language since it was the general language of Hindustan. Consequently, the Company ordered that all commanding officers of the *sepoy* battalion should be able to communicate in that language. This should be deemed as an essential qualification. Besides, knowledge of Hindustani was made compulsory for the post of Adjutant and other staff appointment. Similarly, later the study of Hindustani was declared to be a part of the duty of the European officers. It is also needs to be mentioned here that the system of awarding gifts to the successful candidates of the entrance examination was introduced during this time in the Presidency.

In reality, the condition of the native officers was deplorable. The attitude of the European soldiers towards the native officers was equally bad. Even an English sergeant commanded the native officers of the highest rank. The native officers were of the compelled to live in the same tents along with the *sepoys* in the camp ground. Generally, the native officers acted as the link between the *sepoys* and the commanding officers. As discussed before, the English officers were better paid than the native officers. The European soldiers were accommodated in *barracks*, whereas the native *sepoys* were allowed to live in huts. Possibly, it is this difference in terms of pay and entitlements, housing conditions and privileges that has given rise to a strong debate among the military theorists about the privilege and rights enjoyed by the British officers and Native officers in the Madras Army.

Conclusion

Despite these differences, the discipline in the Madras Army was quite good. The general spirit of the army was congenial, making it a compact and strong fighting unit. It was only under a particular set of circumstances that mutinies took place. In fact, the mutinies were the inevitable outcomes of the conflicts between certain requirements of discipline and the religious sentiments of the *sepoys*. However, the Madras army remained well disciplined and loyal till the very end of the Company's rule. During the time of troubles like the Vellore Mutiny in 1806 and Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the Madras Army rendered admirable service and extended their support and loyalty to the Company for which the Madras Army was lavishly praised. Compared to the other two presidency armies, the Madras army's loyalty and their disciplined life had been praised by the contemporary army officers on numerous occasions. Every kind of discipline had been accepted by the *sepoys* of the Madras army. The mutinous spirit was comparatively low among them. Still, the official records revealed that the Madras army was prone to disobey the rules and regulations of the army and such acts of disobedience were met with severe punishments. In the long run, the Madras army, despite the allegations

of indiscipline remained loyal and obedient towards their colonial military officers. The code of discipline and punishment somehow kept them aloof of doing any kind of regular obstruction against the colonial army establishment.

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MADRASO ARMIJOS DISCIPLINOS FORMAVIMAS OST-INDIJOS BENDROVĖS DOMINAVIMO PRADŽIOJE

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Santrauka. Pastaruoju metu pagausėjo Pietų Azijos kolonijinių armijų istorijos tyrimų. Pats armijos supratimas labai smarkiai pasikeitė XVIII amžiuje, kai Ost-Indijos bendrovė suformavo naujus armijos batalionus ir skyrė pastovų atlyginimą bei kitus finansinius priedus. Į Bendrovės padalinius jau nebuvo žvelgiama kaip į militaristinių žemėvaldos elitą, kaip buvo Mogolų viešpatavimo laikotarpiu. Armijai ėmė tiesiogiai vadovauti europiečių profesionalai, turintys didžiulę modernios karybos patirtį. Bendrovės padaliniams buvo taikomos naujos taisyklės ir potvarkiai, kurie didžia dalimi atkartojė europines tradicijas palaikant drausmę ir tvarką jėgos struktūrose. Bengalijos, Bombėjaus ir Madraso prezidentinės armijos, suformuotos XVIII amžiuje, tapo kolonijinės plėtros instrumentu Pietų Azijoje ir kitur. Madraso armija ilgą laiką buvo gana dosniai ekonomiškai remiama vadų kolonijuotojų, nes išsiskyrė savo lojalumu Bendrovės administracijai Pietų Azijoje. Mažaūgių Madraso armi-

jos pėstininkų, kuriuos malonybiškai vadino „tom-tomais“, užduotis buvo ugnies užkarda imperiškuose Bendrovės žygiuose į Afriką ir Pietryčių Aziją. Tačiau, nepaisant to, kad Madraso armija lengvai pasiduodavo manipuliacijoms, XVIII amžiuje ji sukilo net kelis kartus, o tai turėjo didelių pasekmių Vellore perversmo metu 1805–1806 m. Atlyginimo, socialinio padėties, rasės ir regioninė diskriminacija kurstė armijoje sukilėliškas nuotaikas ir nepaklusnumą disciplinai. Šios vietinių „sukilimų“ istorijos kontrastuoja su istoriškai suformuotais Madraso armijos naratyvais, armijos, kuri dažnai vaizduojama kaip tobula disciplinuota militaristinės tradicijos, susiformavusios kolonijiniame žemyne, įsikūnijimas. Šis straipsnis siekia įrodyti, kad Madraso armija, nors joje ir pasitaikydavo neramumų, anaipatol netraktuotinių kaip laikinas reiškinys, išliko gerokai lojalesnė už kitas prezidentines armijas XIX šimtmetyje. Geriausias to pavyzdys – 1857 metų Didysis sukilimas.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Anglų Ost-Indijos bendrovė, disciplina, Madraso armija, prasižengimai, karininkas, karo įstatymas, Panchayat sistema, sipajus.

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