

CONTRIBUTION OF THE PATIALA STATE TEACHERS AND TEACHING INSTITUTIONS IN THE PROPAGATION OF THE WORLD WARS

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Abstract

Between 1914 and 1945 CE, the world witnessed two devastating world wars. These wars had a profound impact on global politics, economies, and societies across the world. India, under British rule, was obligated to provide men and money to aid the British. The princely states of Punjab also contributed enormously to this cause. The Princely State of Patiala was one of them. They recruited young men for the help of the British army and generous monetary help was also provided to the British government. The administrative machinery of the state worked exhaustively for the help of the British government. Everyone had played their part assiduously. Even teachers and teaching institutions of the princely states also played a critical role in war-related activities. State teachers were state employees and salaried people; they had to follow orders of state administration. In both of the great wars, teachers and their worthy institutions played a vital part and helped their state in the war propagation and war fund generation as well. They encouraged the youth to participate in the wars and create awareness about the war among the common people of the state. In this research paper, my aim is to uncover the hidden role of teachers and educational institutions during both the World Wars.

Keywords: World Wars, Princely State of Patiala, Teachers, Teaching Institutions, British Empire, Allied Nations, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh.

INTRODUCTION

If education is a divine light that can illuminate the lives of students, then the teacher is the true torchbearer, who contributes the most to guide this light towards them. A teacher is the most important and integral part of the whole education system. He tries to inculcate the values of life into the students through his teachings. Teachers' hard work in imparting knowledge to their students is worthy, commendable, and a value of appreciation. Being a teacher is not an easy job. They need to learn before they teach their students. Teachers themselves are great learners because a learner can be a great leader of the future. Therefore, they lead their students toward a great future.

‘The glory of Patiala lies primarily in its unchallenged and unsurpassed war record.’¹

Beginning with World War I, it was an unprecedented event in human history. Nobody could predict the scale of the war and what measures would be necessary to fight it. Therefore, efforts were made based on assumptions or immediate needs at the time. The British government asked for help from their allies. Almost every princely state of India helped the British government in this crisis. The princely state of Patiala also paid his duty towards the British in this critical situation. Every official of the Patiala state played a vital role in the war activities, but the record of their services was very scanty due to the chaotic situation. Of course, there is a lack of records but their worthy contribution can't be ignored.

The Princely State of Patiala was the largest princely state among all the three Phulkian States of Punjab, the other two were Jind and Nabha. Patiala State was also an important princely state of the Malwa region of Punjab. Patiala had rightly been described as the cradle of imperial service troops. Patiala State remained loyal to the British government since the signing of the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809 CE.² Patiala State had proved its loyalty to the British at every step. Long before the two world wars, Lord Dufferin appealed to the princely

states, especially those who had good fighting forces or martial races in their forces to create Service Troops in their states for the help of the British government. To fulfill this mission, Patiala State created a body of six thousand cavalry and one thousand infantry and named it Imperial Service Troops in 1889 CE.³

In the First World War, India as well as Patiala State helped a lot to the British Empire by the recruitment of forces and war fund generation. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala made some extra efforts for the victory of British Empire and the result was in the favour of British Empire. Maharaja himself left Patiala for the western war front on 5th October, 1914 CE.⁴ He also represented the princes of India at the Imperial War Conference and the Imperial War Cabinet in England in 1918 CE. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh contributed a lot in the First World War. Patiala State contributed about twenty-eight thousand men in the First World War with a hefty amount of rupees 12.5 million. In reward of his great services in the war, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was granted a personal salute of Nineteen Guns in 1918. He was also invested with the insignia of 'Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire' and also promoted with the rank of Major-General.⁵

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was highly dedicated towards the state education and made significant efforts to improve school and college education in the state. During World War I, one major accomplishment was the use of education to support war related propaganda and raise funds for the war efforts, with teachers and educational institutions playing a crucial role in this effort. There is a notable example that illustrates this. In the year 1919, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh said, 'I have placed special emphasis on education, which I consider the most valuable asset that any state can possess. In my state, primary and collegiate education is imparted free of cost to the pupils, and the state has a generous scholarship system to make higher education accessible to even the poorest of my subjects. Recently, I approved a sum of rupees eighty-one thousands to establish a new science department at Mohindra College. My ultimate goal is to introduce commercial and technological education in the state so that our people can have a say in the higher councils of the state.'⁶ All these efforts and achievements benefitted the British government in some way or the other. It is evident that he had a strong desire to uplift the status of his state's subjects and recognized education as a powerful tool to achieve this goal. His vision for education was rooted in the belief that it could empower individuals to better their lives and positively impact their communities. Through his efforts to promote education, he aimed to create a more equitable society where everyone had access to opportunities for growth and development. Overall, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh's dedication to education serves as a testament to his commitment to improving the lives of those under his rule and his progressive outlook towards governance.

In the Second World War, Governor General of India Lord Linlithgow declared the participation of India in the war without the consent of the Indian National Congress, the largest party of India that represented the largest population of India. But the princely state of Patiala and most of the princely states of India helped the British Empire in this war, like in World War I. Patiala State also played a significant role through recruitment and finances in the Second World War. Maharaja Yadavinder Singh was the worthy son of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh and he added laurels to the glorious record of his great ancestors. At the time of Second World War, he helped the British Empire as before, and for that the war propaganda was a very important part of the war. For this purpose all the employees and officers of Patiala state worked very hard. In this context the role of teachers and teaching institutions was very important and significant. The primary responsibility of teachers is to impart knowledge to their students, but these teachers went beyond their duty. Details of their exceptional efforts are provided below.

STATE WAR PROPAGANDA

During the world wars, the war propaganda movement aimed to boost the morale and determination of the people of Patiala region to resist the aggression of the Central Powers and later, the Axis Powers. To achieve this, the movement conducted extensive propaganda campaigns. However, they recognized that it would be more effective to have educational authorities handle the propaganda aimed at the student community, to keep it separate from the general propaganda drive.⁷

In the princely state of Patiala, the National War Front movement was inaugurated by Maharaja Yadvinder Singh in November, 1942 CE.⁸ His younger brother Raja Bhalinder Singh was deputed as the controller of the National War Front movement in the state. It was decided to enroll state subjects as members of the movement by signing a pledge in the approved form. The state's education department was the leading promoter of the National War Front propaganda. Several schools had permanent arrangements for the display of war literature, and the literature was issued to the students at home as well. The teachers also provided short discourses to apprise the students of the day-to-day progress of the war. Student parties were engaged in active propaganda work in neighbouring villages to sustain interest in war matters. A novel idea in this direction was a group of students from Payal High School were trained in *giddha* dance, and their performances were well-received in urban and rural areas.⁹

War Front meetings were frequently organized in the various centers of the state. Especially in Patiala city, the City High School playground was always used for the war board meetings.¹⁰ Several official letters or circulars were issued by the War Board Patiala to the Director of Public Instructions and principals of other schools and colleges, especially the principal of Mohindra College Patiala to instruct their students to attend the war board meetings. Many recruitment programs were also organized in the playgrounds of various schools. The headmaster of the schools generously offered the school buildings to support the war propagation programs.¹¹ This act of kindness not only demonstrates their commitment to the war effort but also provides a safe and secure space for the programs to take place. Various teachers voluntarily presented their services for the war propaganda program. In such an example, a war board meeting held on 28th July, 1941 under the presidency of Raja Bhalinder Singh. A teacher named Shiv Das; headmaster from Sanatan Dharam High School Bathinda offered his services for delivering lectures in connection with war.¹²

On 14th May, 1945 CE, a fair had been organized at Patiala in the City High School ground. Lecturers and *pracharaks* had also delivered their speeches on war efforts and post-war reconstruction. In this connection, Professor Bhattacharya, Professor Jagjit Singh, Advocate Sheikh Abdul Sattar, Giani Prem Partap Singh delivered their speeches on this occasion.¹³ Several badges and pledges were arranged for village people as well. Special war bulletins for the villagers and the duty of the village schoolmasters was to deliver the war news to the village people. State schools were started each day with a prayer for the victory of Allies Nations. Special periods for school children were arranged for war propagation.¹⁴

From class fifth to tenth, students were asked to write essays in vernacular languages on different aspects of war every month. The essays were selected by the teachers and read by the students in student clubs, where all teachers and students assembled. A prize was also given to the best essay. Short plays were staged by the students and teachers. Two magic lanterns were arranged from state education department for the war propaganda work.¹⁵ Headmasters of High Schools hold meetings in school fortnightly and delivered lectures with magic lantern slides. Propaganda lectures were also delivered in adjoining areas by the teachers.¹⁶

The headmaster of Bhupindra High School, Narnaul, along with the scoutmaster and scouts, toured several villages to perform war propaganda. School meetings were conducted, and the agenda was to explain the war efforts among the students. Senior teachers and the principal interestingly summarized the substance. School parties had been organized, and the days were fixed for delivering speeches to the boys in their literary clubs.¹⁷ In fact the teachers spread no pains in impressing the susceptible minds of the students and inspired them with the high ideals of service. The teachers and students, as well as the educational institutions, played a crucial role in promoting the war.

STATE WAR LITERATURE

War literature was an integral part of the war propaganda and war-related activities. During the time of war, literature played a crucial role in shaping public opinion and promoting war-related activities. War literature was often used as a tool for propaganda, designed to influence people's emotions and beliefs in support of the war

effort. It included a wide range of genres, such as poetry, novels, memoirs, posters, propaganda pamphlets, etc. These works aimed to inspire patriotism towards the British, glorify military service, and demonize the enemy, among other objectives.

Many school teachers wrote various poems and other war-related articles to motivate the common people for their active participation in the war. A poem titled 'Britain-don't fear from Nazis' was written by Giani Labh Singh. He was a school teacher at a middle school in Khamanon, Patiala. This poem was full of motivation and enthusiasm.¹⁸ Labh Singh Mauji, a teacher from the same school from Khamanon wrote another poem to encourage state youth to participate in the war. The poem also highlights the worst role of Hitler and also reveals his responsibility for the war.¹⁹ Another teacher Sarup Singh from high school of Payal, Patiala wrote several booklets such as *Jangi Gidha*, *Jangi Sadda*, *Jangi Hinjhu* to arouse interest in villagers for enlistment in British Indian forces. He formed a *giddha* party in Payal which was useful for war propaganda and was also called by the district officials to War Board meetings for recruitment and collection of contributions.²⁰ Another pamphlet titled *Purab aur Pacham* by Professor Harditt Singh Dhilon. He worked at Khalsa College Amritsar. This pamphlet described the merits of Western culture and convinced people to move towards Western culture and support this culture.²¹ A poem titled *Tahzib aur Insaniyat ka Paigam* was written by Mohammad Nazir Ahmed, a teacher from City High School Patiala on 20th July, 1942 CE.²² Apart from the songs and poems of the war front, some stories of ancient warriors and religious teachings encouraging passion and adventure were also quoted. This initiative attracted the crowd and also saved the audience from boredom.²³ Pamphlets in Punjabi and Urdu were distributed among the rural population of the state.

Various posters regarding the war had been sent to the principals of state schools and colleges for war propagation. Some war posters had peculiar titles like *Dostana Baten*, 'Indian Hockey Team beat the Germans, Anti-Japanese, and Warships'.²⁴ The posters were distributed to students and posted on school and college notice boards. A teacher named Babu Lal Sharma, along with the students from the State High School in Sunam, Patiala, prepared a special drama about war titled *Pet ki Pukar*. The drama conveyed a moral lesson to the public in general and, served as an inspiration to the youth in particular. The prime motive of this drama was to emphasize the importance of working together to achieve the allied aim.²⁵ Actually, war literature enlivened the whole war propaganda movement.

WAR DONATIONS AND FUND GENERATION

In every event, regardless of its nature, finance plays a crucial role in making it happen. However, in times of war, the collection of funds becomes much more urgent and critical. This is because the necessary resources to fight a war, such as equipment, supplies, and personnel, require a significant amount of funding. Without adequate funding, it would be impossible to wage a war effectively. Therefore, fundraising and collection of funds become a top priority during times of war.

Many initiatives were launched by the state for war fund generation. During a crucial War Board meeting on May 8th, 1942, the intensification of the defense savings movement in the Patiala state was discussed. The meeting was presided over by the chief of the general staff, who proposed several suggestions to encourage greater participation. One of the key proposals was to provide state servants who earned a monthly salary of thirty rupees with the opportunity to purchase a defense savings certificate worth of ten rupees. These certificates would accrue interest calculated at the then existing bank rate and would be returned to the purchasers after a fixed period of five years. This was seen as a way to encourage savings and support the defense efforts of the state.²⁶

A big wrestling match was arranged at the Yadvindra stadium on 18th December, 1941 CE for the war fund generation. In this connection, a request was placed to the principal of Mohindra College Patiala to arrange chairs and other suitable furniture for the event. Other educational institutions of Patiala State, like City High School, Sanatan Dharam High School, Lower Middle School of Sanauri Gate, and Muslim High School of

Patiala, were sent their furniture for the events related to the war fund generation. Ticket books had also been sent to the principals of the eminent state schools, and their duty was to sell those tickets. They performed their duties diligently.²⁷

The state schools had also made some useful donations towards the war funds. For example, Bhupindra Narnarayan Khalsa Polytechnic Patiala contributed sixty-one rupees to the state war fund in 1940 CE. Rajindra Intermediate College Bathinda contributed eighteen rupees for war fund in 1940 CE.²⁸ The headmaster of Anglo Vernacular Middle School of Doraha sent a draft of fifty-nine rupees on 12th September, 1941 CE to Patiala state as a war fund donation.²⁹ Not only government institutions but private and aided schools and institutions also contributed to war funds to the best of their abilities. All the funds and donations were utilized for the help of allied powers during the Second World War.

THE PATIALA LITERARY LEAGUE

During a time of great international crisis, the Patiala Literary League played a vital role in promoting peace. This non-political, non-religious, and non-sectarian association of Patiala State was inspired by the ruler's noble cause of keeping the threatening clouds of war away from modern civilization. The league's members were eager to follow their leader's example and contribute to the pressing need of the present war. Their goal was to demonstrate their commitment to peace and to meet the high aim at hand. The society had organized a social drama in aid of war funds generation. Another motive of this society was to help and expedite the state's efforts towards war activities.³⁰

THE STUDENTS VOLUNTARY SERVICE

The students' voluntary services in the state were started in 1944 CE. The main aim of this service was to provide voluntary help to the state government in the efficient execution of the war, also to check the spread of false rumors, and suppress the baseless propaganda by the enemy agencies against allied forces. The members of this service also helped the government in the enrolment of recruits for the different branches of the British forces. Another contribution of this service was the raising of funds for the supplies of amenities, comforts, and entertainment to the Indian troops. The members also helped the administration to educate the masses to live as peaceful citizens of the motherland. The state utilized its students as a supporting force for war-related activities.³¹

SPECIAL CLASSES AND TRAININGS FOR STUDENTS

State students were also groomed with special classes and training. For example, the preparatory class for emergency commissions in British forces was initialized at Mohindra College in July, 1941 CE. One hundred and ten students had received training till 1942 CE. Out of them sixty-one students had been selected for the King's commission and fourteen students for the viceroy's commission. The rest had been absorbed in other activities in connection with the war. An Air Raid Precaution Class and officers training class had been started in 1942 CE. Training in first aid to the injured was also given and a large number of students had been qualified themselves in it. Students also obtained certificates from the Saint John Ambulance Association.³²

Professor Kashmiri Lal Budhiraja from Mohindra College delivered speeches in the city town hall and fort chowk respectively on Air Raid Precaution program. These meetings attended by a large number of people.³³ A military exhibition train reached Patiala and Bathinda on the 19th and 22nd of April, 1942 CE, respectively. All the teaching institutions of Patiala and Bathinda were instructed to send their students and teaching staff and took the opportunity to witness the exhibits on the train³⁴

The state also had a benevolent character and sympathized with the children and dependents of the soldiers. For the soldiers who were Patiala state subjects but were employed in the British force and who were or had been on active service overseas during the present war, the state graciously pleased to sanction the grant of fee concessions to their children and dependents up to the eighth class.³⁵ All the above-mentioned efforts of the

Patiala State were commendable, and one of the unsung and underrated heroes behind these efforts was definitely the teachers, students, and the teaching institutions of the Patiala State.

As I mentioned earlier, the World Wars, especially the First World War, were unprecedented events in human history. Initially, during World War I, it was difficult to maintain accurate records of activities due to the chaos of war. Despite this, state teachers and teaching institutions played a crucial role during this time, although their contributions were not properly documented by the state administration which was mainly focused on generating war funds and recruiting soldiers.

However, in the Second World War, the state administration made a conscious effort to properly record the duties and contributions of all teachers and teaching institutions in the war effort. This ensured that their valuable services were acknowledged and recognized, thereby highlighting the important role played by educators in times of war.

CONCLUSION

So many teachers wrote so many pamphlets and articles to motivate the peoples for the war recruitment. The school teachers used magic lanterns to project pictures of war efforts to students. The usage of so many school and college grounds for the purpose of recruitment of the forces and also for the important meetings. These were only some fragments of their efforts to help their respective states and the British government as well. It is quite difficult to judge their efforts through a few words. Their hard-work and hardships are beyond the words. Despite their hardships, these teachers remained committed to their students and their education, providing them with a unique and impactful learning experience that would stay with them for years to come. Their efforts were truly invaluable, and their contributions to education and society as a whole cannot be overstated.

REFERENCES

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2. Patiala State Records, Head - Ijlas-i-Khas, Basta No. 120, File No. 1556, p. 39, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, Punjab and thereafter mentioned as PSA. One of the reasons for the Malwa princely states' loyalty towards the British government was the Treaty of Amritsar signed in 1809 CE between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the British government. Under this treaty, the princely states in the Malwa region were placed under the protection of the British government.
3. Patiala State Records, Head - Ijlas-i-Khas, Basta No. 120, File No. 1556, p. 57, PSA.
4. Umrao Bahadur (comp.), *Patiala and the Great War: A Brief History of the Services of the Premier Punjab State*, Printed by Medici Society, London, 1923, p. 2. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh inspected a British 12 inch Mark III railway howitzer on the Western Front near Borre in France during World War I.
5. Administration Report of the Patiala State for 1932-33, pp. 6-7.
6. Patiala State Records, Head - Ijlas-i-Khas, Basta No. 120, File No. 1556, p. 190, PSA.
7. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 10, File No. 158, p. 25, PSA.
8. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 11, File No. 187, 1942, p. 13, PSA.
9. Ibid, p. 14. Giddha dance is basically a folk dance of Punjab.
10. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 5, File No. 46, p. 5, PSA.
11. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 1, File No. 4, p. 127, PSA.
12. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 1, File No. 1, pp. 829-831, PSA.
13. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 8, File No. 118, p. 91, PSA.
14. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 10, File No. 141, pp. 15-16, PSA.
15. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 2, File No. 17, p. 147, PSA. Magic lantern is an early type of image projector that uses pictures on transparent plates, lenses, and a light source.
16. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 10, File No. 159, p. 3, PSA.
17. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 7, File No. 106, p. 9, PSA.
18. Faridkot State Records, Head- War, Basta No. 14, File No. 284, p. 155, PSA.
19. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 12, File No. 191, p. 117, PSA.

20. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 3, File No. 24, p. 207, PSA. Jangi Gidha- War Dance, Jangi Sadda- War Invitation, Jangi Hinghu- War Tears.
21. Ibid, p. 207.
22. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 13, File No. 202, p. 15, PSA.
23. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 10, File No. 148, p. 5, PSA.
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26. Ibid, p. 231.
27. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 2, File No. 16, pp. 71-163, PSA.
28. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 13, File No. 206, pp. 157-163, PSA.
29. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 12, File No. 192, p. 3, PSA.
30. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 6, File No. 79, p. 201, PSA.
31. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 10, File No. 159, pp. 15-17, PSA.
32. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 10, File No. 153, p. 21, PSA. Air raid precautions are measures taken to protect the public from air-raid attacks.
33. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 03, File No. 26, p. 215, PSA.
34. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 01, File No. 2, p. 85, PSA.
35. Patiala State Records, Head- War Board, Basta No. 02, File No. 19, p. 109, PSA.