



WAR MARTYRS FAMILIES: COMPENSATORY BENEFITS AND WELFARE MEASURES WITH REFERENCE TO KARNATAKA STATE

V. J. Girisha*

Rekha K. Jadhav**

Abstract: *India stands at second position in terms of military manpower after China contributing a force of 15 Lakhs standing army. The Indian armed forces ensure nations sovereignty by protecting the nation from external threats. Army personals have an exceptional tradition of safeguarding and maintaining integrity of the nations, while discharging their duties they present the ideals of discipline, hard work, and dedication. In every battles the soldiers creates a new chapter of their valour performances and leave their imprints to the coming generations. In this process many sacrifice their lives for the sake of the country those killed in war are the War Martyrs. For their supreme sacrifices and services, it becomes countries prime responsibility to take care of their families and dependents. For the valour performances, sacrifices and in recognition of their services government grants them gallantry and cash awards, the family members and dependents are extended with various compensatory reliefs and welfare measures. The present article deals with compensatory benefits and rehabilitative measure of war martyrs families in general and in particular with the support system provided by the Karnataka state.*

Keywords: *War Martyrs, Welfare measures, Military families, War Widows, Ex-Servicemen*

*Research Scholar, DOS in Sociology, University of Mysore, Mysore

**Assistant Professor, Dept. of Sociology, Maharajas College, University of Mysore, Mysore



INTRODUCTION

The Indian armed forces ensure nations sovereignty by protecting the nation from external threats. Army personals have an exceptional tradition of safeguarding and maintaining integrity of the nation, while discharging their duties they present the ideals of discipline, hard work, and dedication. In every battles the soldiers creates a new chapter of their valour performances and leave their imprints to the coming generations. For their supreme sacrifices and services, it becomes countries prime responsibility to take care of their families and dependents.

The government is taking care of its soldiers from the time of its inception. The government is committed to helping its brave soldiers and their families by floating a number of welfare schemes for them, in lieu of their services both the central and state government looks after its soldiers and their dependents. Though it is the joint responsibility of state and central government but the majority of the problems are addressed and resolved by the respective state governments. To assist state government the (DGR) Directorate General Resettlement have established RajyaSainik board at state level and ZillaSainik Boards at district levels for formulating the policies and implementing them with regard to welfare and resettlement of Ex-servicemen's, war martyrs and their families.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The honours and awards are the part of regular armies. Historically India has witnessed the system of honours and awards to the soldiers by granting a share of incentives which has continued through the ages, the first references of such types can be found in *agnipurana* where the ruler was advised to pay the spoils of war among his servants in equal manner. Later in the epic age Mahabharata the merit of dying as martyrs in the cause of dharma was considered to be one of the easiest ways of attaining moksha. Attaining of svarga was the highest awards in military adventure during those times.

Inscriptions like Agnipurana, Sangamliterature; Arthasastra of Kautilya; Sukraniti and Krtyakalpataru have shown a number of instances of gallantry awards to the soldiers of the dynasties, the kings use to honour the soldiers and their families with land grants and relief from the prevailing tax systems. During the Medieval period the system of honours and rewards gained its importance and was practiced by most of the empires. Occasionally the kings used to provide grants to its soldiers and his families before the battles so that the



soldiers will retain their loyalty towards the king and empire. Epigraphical India gives stray references on customs of granting pensions to the heirs of the warriors killed in the battlefield. Posthumous honours to the martyrs can be traced back to Mughal rulers wherein an individual was honoured through titles, robes, kettle drums, standards, ensigns and land grants for their distinct service and for risking their lives for the empire. During the British rule the Indian soldiers were not much benefited with the welfare facilities but after independence the Indian government have introduced compensatory benefits and welfare measures from time to time, and have created different ventures for the rehabilitation of the war martyrs families and dependents.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

War Martyrs

War is a state of armed conflict between societies which is characterised by extreme collective aggressions, destruction and usually high mortality. War is a murderous phenomenon and is indeed a very rich human activity, to reach goals human beings often use violence and war is one such means through which goals are attained. War in the material sense is an act or a series of acts of violence by one government against another or a dispute between governments carried on by violence. War is a state of armed hostile between sovereign nations or governments, thus war takes place in a particular political, strategic and tactical environment.

Martyr is one who lays down his life for his faith (Foxye, John 1926). The term martyr comes from the Greek "Martur" which means "witness". Martyrs thus bear witness to their cause by sacrificing their lives as proof of its validity. In other words martyr is an exaggerated desire to sacrifice oneself for others and to have the sacrifice recognised. Encyclopaedia Britannica refers martyr as anyone who sacrifices his life or something of great value for the sake of principles. In Indian context dying for a noble cause like patriotically dying for a nation's glory in war is considered to be the act of martyr. The death of Kshatriya on the battlefield is considered to be highly noble among Hinduism. Martyrs are known by different names in different religions in Sikhism it is "Shaheed" and among the Muslims it is "Shahid". The word Shahid is not of Sanskrit origin but it is of Arabic-Persian origin which clearly says dying for the cause.



The above content gives a brief description of “War” and “Martyrs” thus it is clear that a state of open armed conflict against an enemy is war in which the soldiers sacrifice their lives for noble cause or for the sake of the country are the martyrs. They are the soldiers, warriors or the fighters who becomes a legendary figure of the whole nation, military regiments and families. The nation pays homage for their sacrifices and feats are attributed.

Welfare

Welfare is the provision of a minimal level of well-being and social support for all citizens, sometimes referred to as public aid. Government program which provides financial aid to support individuals or groups, welfare programs are funded by taxpayers and allow people to cope with financial stress during rough periods of their lives. The goal of welfare varies, as it looks to promote the pursuance of work, education or, in some instances a better standard of living.

Receiving financial aid from the government or from a private organization because of hardship and need is welfare. In case of War martyrs families the welfare measures are much essential to fulfil the needs and necessities of the dependents and the family members of the deceased soldiers. The moment family losses an earning hand it affects them in various ways socially, economical and psychologically they get deprived. In purview of this the families need a mechanism of support system which can reduce the further damage to the family members and dependents.

Compensatory benefits and welfare measures

A comprehensive welfare package and facilities to the Next-of-Kin (NOK) of those soldiers of Indian armed forces killed in the terrorist or enemies’ action has been worked out and implemented by the government. In general the basic welfare package through the government includes:

- Lump sum ex-gratia compensation on a graded scale
- Monthly family pensions (Liberalised family pension) based on the last drawn salary of the deceased soldier
- Death gratuity and family gratuity as applicable
- Medical facilities
- Canteen facilities
- Land allotments



- War widow quarters in case of married soldiers death
- Rehabilitative measures
- Self-employment and income generation schemes to the dependents
- Jobs on compensatory backgrounds and
- Other basic amenities

Benefits provided by Army

- Army Group Insurance
- AGI Maturity
- Leave Encashment
- Facilities through Army Wives Welfare Association
- Benefits through Army Officers Benevolent Fund
- Benefits through Army Central Welfare Fund/National Defence Fund
- Assistance from Army Welfare Corpus
- Housing 3% reservation in AWHO projects

War Martyrs families in Karnataka: Benefits from the State

Karnataka state has a long history of military system, many dynasty have emerged and collapsed but have contributed equally to the glory of the state. Since pre and post-independence the state has emerged as one of the important source of supplying manpower to the armed forces of the nation. The state has provided top generals, brave officers and jawans to the armed forces. Belgaum, Bangalore and Kodagu districts have become the main recruiting zones in the state. The official statistics of RajyaSainik Board as on December 2013 shows 72,172 registered Ex-servicemen out of which 59560 Army, 10266 Air force and 2346 from the navy. The state has homed military bases and regiments, training centres, training commands, War-memorial hostels, military and sainik schools etc. Since independence and till 2013 the state has witnessed 362 battle casualties cases (Source: RajyaSainik Board, Bangalore) and from the time immemorial the families and dependents of the deceased soldiers are been helped through various welfare measures. Not only the state government but some of the Non-government organisations also have shown their keen support in safeguarding the interest war martyrs families.



In particular to Karnataka state the facilities are been revised time to time, the Dependents of Armed Forces Personnel Killed / Armed Forces Personnel Disabled in Wars / War like operations are provided with the following facilities (as per the state rules):

- Ex-Gratia grant of ` 2,00,000/- to fully disabled soldiers & NOKs of soldiers killed in action and ` 50,000 to wounded / missing soldiers
- 2 acres of wet or 4 acres of rain fed or 8 acres of dry land are given to the families of serving personnel killed in action. If land is not available for allotment, a cash grant of ` 1,00,000/- is admissible
- Free built house or Cash in lieu of free built house for battle casualty Officers / JCOs ` 6 lakhs and ORs ` 4.5 lakhs.
- Reservation in employment for dependents of battle casualties under ex-servicemen quota
- Marriage Grant of ` 20,000/- for each daughter of war widows/disabled soldiers.
- House repair grant of ` 20,000 for battle casualties' houses once in 15 years
- House Tax reimbursement to Battle casualties
- Monthly Honorarium of ` 3000 to the widows of soldiers who died in wars before 1978

(Source: <http://www.karnatasainikwelfare.com/index.php/battle-casualties>)

Other than the financial assistance the state government provides scholarships and grants for the children's of the martyrs, reservation of seats to the wards of battle casualties for higher education in technical and medical courses, time to time relief grants to the families, free bus passes to travel within Karnataka, war awards, job opportunities at state level to at least one family member, sainik rest house facilities for the dependents and family members, free hostelling and accommodation facilities to the children's of such families.

The RajayaSainik welfare boards are playing an important role in providing these facilities to the martyr's families; they also assist and address the grievances of the dependents and families members. The RajayaSainik welfare board is the bridge between the state and the central government they aims to serve the War Bereaved, War Disabled, Serving Defence Personnel, Ex-servicemen and their Dependents to the best of their abilities. They provide Healing touch to the War Disabled, Families of the Martyrs and Resettle them in a meaningful and dignified manner. The Rajyasainik board raise funds through Flag Day



celebration and by organising various other activities, the funds are utilised for the welfare of the families and dependents of the military personnel's.

Measures through other Non-government organisations in Karnataka

Unlike the state government the other non-government organisations are also playing an important role in safeguarding the interest of war martyrs families, in the below section some of such important organisation has been listed out:

- ❖ Vasantharatna foundation for Art
- ❖ VeKare Ex-Servicemen Trust (VKET)
- ❖ Ex-servicemen association at state and district level

Vasantharatna foundation for Art

The foundation is set up by renowned Bharatnatyam Dancer Mrs SubhashiniVasanth, in the memory of her husband an Ashoka Chakra (Posthumous) awardee Col. VasanthVenugopal, the first recipient from Karnataka State. The foundation is based on the motto of education and empowerment. The main focus of the foundation is to create support system for the spouses of our Armed forces personnel. The vision of the foundation:

- Empowering the women folks of the martyr's families through education and Art, to help them identifying their potentiality and encourage them to accept the challenges.
- Educate and train children of martyr's families.
- To bridge the relationships between army families on the one hand and members of the larger society who are willing to reach out, on the other.
- To increase public awareness of the sacrifices of soldiers and their families.
- To provide family counselling and legal support.

The foundation is helping the war martyrs families in fulfilling their needs and preparing them to move along the main-stream of the society through Social, Economic and Legal support and assistance. Throughout Karnataka the foundation has succeeded in identifying the families of war martyrs and have extend help through various ventures. The children's of Martyrs families are been provided with educational scholarships and hostel accommodations, they are proving to be a path finder and factor of encouragement to educate children's. The foundation also has succeeded in empowering the War Widows through creating awareness among themselves and training them vocational on different



grounds. The foundation is expanding its network throughout the nation through the medium of Arts and creating awareness among the people on the sacrifices made by the brave soldiers.

VeKare Ex-Servicemen Trust (VKET)

The Mysore based VeKare Ex-Servicemen trust presided by MN Subramani is a NGO consultant which aims to provide legal and administrative assistance and support to Ex-servicemen's, War martyrs families, dependents and others. The trust acts as a support system to the families and dependents of military personals and ex-servicemen's. The trust has succeeded in solving number of issues related to Ex-servicemen's and is a ray of hope for the needy families.

The trust focuses on the issues such as:

- Pension grievances
- Personal and family issues related to such families
- Marital related issues
- Raising voice against corrupt officials and providing justice
- Documentation help to the Ex-servicemen's and Martyrs families
- Monetary settlements issues
- Assisting war widows in various ways – job on compensatory grounds, legal advices

Ex-servicemen association at state and district level

The Ex-servicemen associations at state and district levels are playing important roles in various ways. These associations are led by ex-servicemen themselves, they act as the helping hands to the needy families. The members of the associations join together and fight for the cause. In the state of Karnataka these associations are very active and supportive to the families of military personals. Extend help and guidance to the needy personnel and their families; they create awareness amongst the civilian public about the importance of the service rendered by the Ex-service personnel, War Martyrs in the service of the Nation. Below mentioned are important functions of these associations:

- Redressal of grievances of needy families in a peaceful & non-violent manner
- Enlighten and create awareness for the legitimate rights and privileges



- They pursue and act on the deficiency of services to ESM (Pension Disbursing Authorities) like Banks/DPDOs/Treasuries since families of bereaved, ESM at District and Taluk level face tremendous grievances.
- Support children of Ex-servicemen, widows, war widows in admission to educational institutions of academic/technical, professional courses and for employment.
- To educate and train youth
- To improve the social, cultural, educational and economic conditions of the members by organizing ESM Corporation, old age homes, conventions and exhibitions.

The important Ex-servicemen associations such as:

- Karnataka State Ex-Servicemen Council
- Madras Sapper Ex-Servicemen's Rehabilitation Association
- Karnataka Ex-Servicemen Welfare Society
- North Bangalore Ex-Servicemen Association
- Kodagu Ex-Servicemen's Association
- Coorg Ex-Servicemen's Friends Association
- Coorg Ex-Servicemen's Co-operative Society Ltd.
- Belgaum Ex-servicemen association

Thus, these associations promote oneness among all ex-servicemen's and try to resolve various issues related to the families and dependents of retired military personals.

CONCLUSION

Worldwide the Indian armed forces are applauded for their valour performances, dedications and devotions. Since independence the armed forces have involved themselves into various activities, not only guarding the frontiers of the nation but they have also indulged into maintaining internal security, building strong relationships with the civil counterpart, assisting neighbouring countries and been part of the UN peace keeping missions. In the verge of their duty many sacrifices their life for the sake of the country. In response the country's prime responsibility is to protect and safe guard the interest of their families and dependents, there is no second opinion on the way the central and state government are taking care of these families. The time to time implementation of financial assistance, welfare measures and ventures of resettlement and rehabilitation have really



proved to be a positive step taken by the Indian government and the efforts made by various other organisation is also a remarkable contribution towards the War martyrs families.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present article gives a glimpse of the welfare measures and other facilities entitled to the war martyrs families through central/state government and other organisations. This article opens up new grounds for further research; an empirical study can address the following issues to have more insight on the subject.

- a) Whether the war martyrs families are utilising the facilities?
- b) Do the families have awareness of the facilities?
- c) Is the entire mechanism of support system is working properly and reaching out the needy ones on time?
- d) Is there any intervention of third party?
- e) Have the welfare measures and facilities improved the social-economic conditions of the war martyrs families?
- f) Whether the compensatory benefits have led to familial disharmony?
- g) What are the new challenges the war martyrs families are facing?

REFERENCES

- 1) Baranwal SP (Ed.) (1986) "Military year book 1985-86" A Guide publication: Delhi.
- 2) Ernest Dupuy R and Trevor N. Dupuy (1970) "The encyclopaedia of Military History" MacDonald: London.
- 3) Foxe, John, (1926) "Foxe's Book of Martyrs" New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- 4) Gandhi, S. S. (Ed.). 1995, "India's Highest Gallantry awards and the men who won them, 1945-1995", Defence Review, New Delhi: India.
- 5) Government of India, Ministry of Defence – Annual Report 2011-2012.
- 6) Govind Tryambak Date, MA (1929) "The art of war in ancient India" Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press.
- 7) Hamilton I McCubbin, Barbara B Dahl and Edna J Hunter (1976) "Families in the military system" Sage publications: London.
- 8) Major Gaoutham Sharma (1966) "Indian army through the ages" Allied publishers private limited: Bombay.



- 9) McArthur, M., Thomson, L., Winkworth, G. and Butler, K. 2010, "Families' experiences of services". Occasional paper No. 30, Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Australia
- 10) Parmar, L. 2003, "Money Matters – The Experience of Kargil War Widows", *Manushi*, Issue 138, pp. 16-19.
- 11) Robins, S. 2011, "Towards Victim-Centred Transitional Justice: Understanding the Needs of Families of the Disappeared in Post conflict Nepal", *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, Vol. 5, pp. 75-98.
- 12) Surendra Nath Sen (1958) "The Military system of the Marathas" Orient Longman's: New Delhi.

WEBSITES

- <http://www.vasantharatna.org/>
- <http://desw.gov.in/>
- <http://www.dgrindia.com/>
- <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/w/welfare.asp>
- <http://www.karnatakasainikwelfare.com/>