

Uses of Animals in the Indian Military According to the Climatic Conditions

By

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Abstract

The animals are used for various work activities throughout history, the animals which can be used as helping hand are called pets. Throughout history, pets are used to help humans in all activities, from climbing mountains to water surfing. Various animals are also used in guarding and defending. The Indian military is one of the largest militaries in the world with the highest active personnel. The climates in India vary according to the regions which also affects the use of animals in the military. Various animals are not able to with-stand with the conditions they are provided in region. Current study focuses on the military animals in different regions according to their specialty and workability. Current study is also conducted to highlight their uniqueness because India is a region of all climates which affects the military livestock with full of variations. The military pets are unique in their way as they are specially trained for special operations. Current study will help in the better understanding for improving the workability of military pets in India so that the handlers required for pets should be reduced and effectiveness in the military operations can be increased.

Keywords: Animals, Climatic Conditions, Defense, Indian Military, Pets.

Introduction

The use of animals is one of the pillars of Indian civilization, the farming and related activities were done with the help of animals (Sheikh, Yadav, & Kumar, 2020). It is greatly known that the use of bullocks, elephants, horses, donkeys, mules, camels, yaks, etc. was used for transporting purposes, dogs were used for guarding, while the eagles and pigeons were used as messengers (Farooq, Verma, & Singla, 2019). The animals used are from the history of the stone age (Mishra, Jain, & Gandhi, 2019). Due to modernization and the use of machinery, there is a decrease in the use of animals, there are some places in India where the use of machines or vehicles failed, but there are some animals that can pass such conditions. The animals used in military are unique in their features which makes them special and particular for such tasks. The maintenance for using animals is low as compared to the maintenance of humans (Tesfahun & Chawla, 2019). The animals can be used in patrolling, load carrying in

various regions, and wars depending on their characteristics (Chaudhary, Prakash, & Kumari, 2018; Gupta & Agarwal, 2018).

1.1. Geographical Location of India:

The climates in India are very different as compared to other countries in the world, so the livestock of a particular region is more adaptable to that climate than the militants belonging to different regions. In India, to the east, there is a hilly region with the heavy rain and Brahmaputra valley, while to the west there is the Run of Kachh and the Arabian Sea with hot air and high temperature. The Run of Kachh is the dry land area with less drinkable water and high temperature while the Arabian sea has a western coastline with which western air and shores arrive and to the south, there is the Indian ocean. India is said as a peninsula because it is surrounded by water from three sides to the southwest there is the Arabian Sea while to the south there is the Indian Ocean and to the southeast, there is the Bay of Bengal (Hatim, Siddiqui, & Kumar, 2020). The north and northeastern side is covered by the Himalayas and to the northwest, there is the Desert of Thar, while the middle land is a plain region with different mountain regions. The Forest of Sunderban, Western and Eastern Ghats are also some of the important places with great climatic variations (Wani, Singla, & Sachar, 2020).

There are different units of animals in the military depending on their applications, the most of work is done using the machine but still use of animals' infantry is special. In the specials tasks and missions, special animals that are specially trained are required. Dogs of different breeds, horses, camels, yak, and mules are the some of animals that are needed in military operations. Their uses may vary according to requirement and working capability depending on the region and climate of the area. Most of the countries in the world have animal infantry in their military as every nation knows the importance of animals (Siddiqui & Kumar, 2020). The person controlling the animal or training the animal is known as the handler (Khan, Gola, & Dhingra, 2020). The combination of animals and militants in war can change the result depending on their working capabilities. In history, wars were fought using horses and elephants, in which the powerful army is with more numbers horse troops and elephant troops.

1.2. Recruitment of Horses in Indian Military:

The Cavalry Regiment is a horse cavalry unit of the Indian Army. It is one of the largest and last, operational horse cavalry units on the earth. The cavalry unit is not in action currently, they are employed for special occasions as well for the security in the vehicle's unreachable locations. "Ashva Shakti Yashobal (Horse Power is Supreme Strength)" is the motto of 61 horse cavalry regiment. The horses are known for their speed and power, throughout history. The horses are used for patrolling the forests as well seashores where loose sand is present to avoid the blockage of the wheel of the vehicle. There are different breeds of horses in the world which are their unique identity. The Indian horses are known for their strength and weather adaptability with good speed. The horsepower term is still in use which indicates the strength of horses. The horses are used in the region where there is no level of the land, small roads, and in some special operations where vehicles are not allowed. The 2021 Arjuna Award was presented for outstanding performances in sports of tent pegging in the 2018 world cup to Risaldar Ajay Anant Sawant for winning the silver medal. Tent pegging is one of the dangerous horse riding sports where the rider of the horse has to lift a target with a sword. Figure 1 is representing the Captain Deepanshu Sheoran with Rio on the Occasion of the Republic Day Parade representing the 61-horse Cavalry Regiment.



Figure 1: Representing the Captain Deepanshu Sheoran with Rio on the Occasion of the Republic Day Parade (Bhalla, 2021)

1.3. Recruitment of Camels in Indian Military:

Camels can join Border Security Force (BSF) at the age of 5 and are confirmed after a formal veterinary checkup. Camel has 15 years of service after finishing it will get retired at the age of 20 or 21. The BSF has three types of camels “Jaisalmeris”, which are sturdily built and can be identified from their look; “And Bikaneris”, which are known for their high-speed runners; and the “Nachnas”, which are used for special occasions and national events. The BSF Frontier Headquarters has a Camel Training Centre in Jodhpur city where the camel and riders get intense training on how to take care of camel and to take care of camel. The camels are desert animals that can live without for more days than other animals. The border of India in Rajasthan has the Desert of Thar, the border security forces need to do patrol every time to tackle the invaders. The camels play an important role in a desert region with high temperatures and no water. Figure 2 isrepresentins the Camel Sangram oldest camel among the contingents who are to be retired after serving the last parade.



Figure 2: Representing the Camel Sangram on the Occasion of the Republic Day Parade Serving the Last Parade of His 16 Years of Service (Menon, 2022).

1.4. Recruitment of Elephants in Indian Military:

The elephants are not part of Indian military forces but they are used in the forest defense and guide. The elephants are the biggest mammals on the land with huge strength. Figure 3 shows the Jim Corbett park security guards showing with elephants while patrolling the forest. The military of India not only secures the border of India but also the need to secure the land within India as “Nakshalwadis” the group of protestors who keep harming the national properties of a nation. The elephants are not used for defense they are just used for patrolling the territory. The use of elephants in tiger reserves is useful for security purposes as very few times tigers attack militants in rare conditions. The skin of elephants is hard so they can survive where there is a danger of wild animals. Elephants are unable to walk on uneven land so they are used on plain lands.



Figure 3: Representing the Jim Corbett National Park Patrolling Team for Security and Quick Help in the Park ([thrillophilia, 2022](#))

1.5. Recruitment of Yaks in Indian Military:

The origin of yak is from China, the Chinese were using yak for carrying loads, milk, and meat productions as well. The body of yak is full of hairs and they can sustain in low-temperature regions, hence not only India but China also use yak. The benefits of using yak are they can sustain huge loads on themselves and can walk in the very cold region also which is not possible for other animals which are not native to this type of region. The food required by yak is minimum as they are said to be survivors in the snow. The Indian army use yak more to climb the Himalayas as the land level is unstable. Figure 4 shows the yak which is used for human transport in the cold temperature mountains.



Figure 4: Representing the Yak Used for Carrying Heavy Load in Low-Temperature Region of Himalayas ([Sharma, 2020](#))

1.6. Recruitment of Mules in Indian Military:

The mules are the animals that have genes from both donkeys and horses. They are used in the Indian military for the transportation of goods as there are some climatic conditions in which horses cannot be used. The mule has high load carrying strength like a donkey and power like a horse as shown in Figure 5. Due to their special arrangement of legs they can walk on any type of road without any hesitation, they can walk on any uneven hard land (IANS, 2017). Indian army mostly uses mules for load transportation in the Himalayan region as well as mountain regions with forests. Indian army has more than 6000 mules' army at present which can work in any conditions or climate. There was a mule named "Pedongi" who had world records in the Guinness Book for the longest-serving mule in the Indian army who serves the nation for 32 years from 1962 to 1992 with a life of 37 years, while the average life of a mule is 18-20 years as shown in Figure 6. Thus, with changing times mules are still in use and maintain their place in the Indian army for transportation in mountains.



Figure 5: Illustrates the Mule Carrying the Luggage from Plain to Mountain, with more than 50 Kg Load and more than 20 Km Walk.

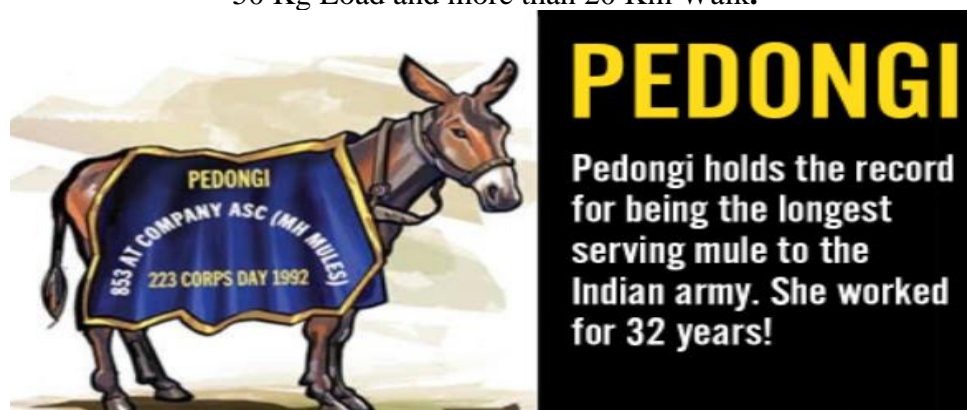


Figure 6: Illustrates the Mule "Pedongi" who has the Guinness Book World Record for serving Indian Military (scrollldroll, 2022).

1.7. Recruitment of Dogs in Indian Military:

In the military forces of every country, there are dogs, which are specialized in different tasks. The dogs have a special place in the Indian military, as in many operations dogs are used. The different breeds of dogs with different characteristics are serving nations that are adaptable to any climatic conditions depending on their breeds. The use of dogs in military services is since history, the dogs are trained in handling different cases depending on their breed's special characteristics (News18, 2021). There were no Golden Retrievers, Labradors, beagles, or

German shepherds as these are all foreign breeds that arrived in India relatively recently. The step towards “Atmanirbhar Bharat” Indian air force is now inducting the Mudhol hound after the Indian army to chase the birds and animals from the airbase which are indigenous breeds of India ([The Economic Times, 2021](#)). Research is done on it to increase the future scope of indigenous breeds to make them better with time and climate.

64 dogs are working in the Indian military to safeguard the nation's capital as per the data [The Economic Times](#) article dated 28 of February 2022. The dog squad currently has 64 trained dogs of the breeds German Shepherds, Labradors, Golden Retrievers, and Belgian Shepherds. Out of a total of 64 dogs, 13 dogs are trackers and 49 dogs are experts in bomb and explosive detection. Figure 7 shows the dogs of the Indian military who serve the nation with their extraordinary performance in the field of defense were honored by the “Chief of Army Staff” commendation card on the occasion of Independence Day ([Mr. Narendra Modi, 2022](#)). The first image of figure 7 shows the dog Vida of Northern command and image 2 of Sophie of special frontier force are two dogs of honor, and even noticed by current Prime minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi on the program “Mann Ki Baat” for their work, where he not only praise them but also praise the researchers to improve the breed of indigenous dogs.



(a)

(b)

Figure 7: Illustrates Two Army Dogs Vida of Northern Command in (a) And Sophie in (b) of Special Frontier Force known for Bomb Disposal Squad Awarded COAS (Chief of Army Staff) Commendation Card on the Occasion of Independence Day of 2020 ([ANI, 2022](#)).

Aakansha Tandon in her news article on Republic Bharat discussed about the introduction of trained breed and super agile of canines i.e., Belgian Malinois in the “Counter-Terrorism Unit of the Indian Army”. She Also stated that this type of canines can be specially trained for identifying the threats and attacking the terrorists in the time of need. This type of canines as shown in Figure 8, are very famous for their trainability, intelligence, bite work, stamina, endurance and excellent agility. It has been state in many researches that they are the best breeds of canines which can be implemented in the Indian Forces ([Tandon, 2021](#)).



Figure 8: Illustrates Indian Army Counter-terrorism Unit New Breed 'Belgian Malinois' Canines to Counter the Opponents

Discussion

The different breeds of animals are used in defense to serve national security. The four legs defense is one of the important defenses of any military of a country in the world. The use of indigenous breeds can help in improving the quality of work as they are adaptable to local climatic conditions, while the foreign or non-local breeds are not able to sustain in a different atmosphere. In India, there is the Himalayas, valleys, mountains, different forests, rivers, sea, ocean, and desert varying the animals and their habitations. The Himalayas are covered with snow and cold wind while the desert is with hot and dry air with no water. The ocean and seas are with saltwater and rivers are with sweet water while the hills regions are with high rainfall.

The use of horses in India is since history, the horses are known for their speed. The horses are unique in their appearance and strength with speed. They are adaptable to any climatic conditions with less maintenance as they have high immunity power. The Indian military had its horse regiment named 61- Calvary horse regiment. The horses were used to patrol in the hilly and mountainous regions where the use of a vehicle is not possible due to small roads or uneven land. But due to time, there is a change in the use of horses as advanced vehicles are used to patrol, so the use of horses becomes less effective. The regions of forests, sea coast, plains and mountains horse can move with the ease. The use of horses is now become occasional as on national occasions only the horses are used which includes independent day and republic day.

The border security force of India is still using camels as their speed in the desert and the capability to sustain themselves in deserts without water makes them more special than other animals. Unlike horses' camels are used for still in use and serve the nation. The camels have speed in sand and sense to find water as well which makes them different as they are one to survive in such conditions. The place of the camel in the Indian army is not replaceable either any advancement is to be done. The camels in India can sustain at high temperature as well as cold temperature during day time sun increase the temperature and at night the temperature falls which makes the environment cool. Camels can survive on dry feed as well and they are easy to handle. The camel is used in the desert region of Rajasthan and some drylands of Gujarat near the border of India and Pakistan. The three types of camels used in India depending on their breed and working ability are jaisalmeris, bikaneris, and nachanas, which are known for their speed, well-built structure, and presentation and are the part of Indian military till their retirement after 15-16 years of service.

The elephants are not used by the central defense system but for internal defense, in the forest, they are used. The use of elephants is since history there were elephant regiments in history where the number of elephants decide the strength of that kingdom. The elephants are known for their power, strength, and clan culture. The maintenance of elephants is high which is not affordable thus advanced types of machinery are used instead of elephants for attacking as well as defense. The elephants are rare as a pet in some regions as well as they are used in forest tracking and guiding where there is a danger of wild animals. In the wild and dense forests where tigers, leopards, and lions are more there is a need for elephants to defend and security not only from animals but also from bad people.

Yak is the animal of the Himalayan region where the cold temperature is the basic temperature with snow. The yaks are found in the north and northeastern part of India which belongs to the Himalayan region. The yak is used for the transportation of goods and services in high-altitude regions of the Himalayas. The long thick covering of hairs on the body of yak makes them adjustable in any cold environment. The yak is a decent animal with simple and friendly nature. The military forces of India, as well as china, use the yak for transportation in the very tough Himalayan region. The Himalayan yak is an animal that can work in any conditions with no stress or cold as the resident animal of the Himalayas. The people living in the Himalayas raise the yak as a pet or domestic animal to take milk and meat from them with the transportation services.

The mules are used in most parts of the world in different countries as they have good strength as well as high workability in any environment. The mules are used to carry a load of up to 50-80 kg on their back for more than 20 km distance. In India, the mules are used in the part of the mountain region where transportation is not possible by any vehicle. The use mule is done mostly in Himalayan Mountains where the water, food as well basics are to provide to the army peoples in any climatic conditions. The use of mule is mostly done because of their fearless in uneven road of mountain with high working efficiency. There is special troop of mules in Indian army that are working for transportation in mountain regions.

The dogs are mostly used for detection and tracking purpose other than guarding something. The dog breeds like Labrador, golden retriever, German shepherd, hounds, etc. are the foreign breed of dog used in Indian military for security purposes. The smell and sound sense make them different from other animal with quick leaning skills. The dogs are loyal animal and listen to their handlers mostly, the use of dogs is from old age from hunting to guarding and tracking. The use of dogs reduces the crime rates and their six work faster so mostly well trained dogs are helpful in finding the culprits. The explosives or tracking in both dogs are used to get better results in any climatic conditions. The dogs are trained in such a way that they are able to analyses their handler and instructions in vocal as well as symbolic forms.

Conclusion

All the animals are the part of ecosystem as they have different abilities and features depending on their environment with different regions having different climate. The use of horses is reducing as the horse regiment is closed in 2019 due to use of vehicles for patrol. The horses are used occasional on national events like republic day and Independence Day. The camels are used in desert region and drylands where there is low water and temperature is high depending on their breeds present in border security forces. The elephants have strength but the cost of using elephant is high and the excessive hunting of elephants in world decreases the use of elephants in defense.

Yak is animal of Himalayas where the low temperature is observed which are used for carrying the loads in different regions of Himalayas at high altitude which are very useful for army in any climatic conditions. Mules are the animal used in mountain region due to their load carrying skills in any type of uneven land and has special troops in Indian army but they are not useful for reproduction hence need to by new after the retirement of other. The dogs are most intelligent among these animals and are used in all parts of country which are independent of cold climate but need special care in summer or high temperature. The use of animals are mostly done by analyzing their origin and work ability and their need to the military forces.

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