

## Honorary Ranks for CAPFs: A Comparative Study of Military– Paramilitary Welfare Parity in India

Payal Arya<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Pranay Kumar Aditya<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D Research Scholar, Raffles University, Neemrana, Alwar, Rajasthan-301705

<sup>2</sup>Senior Associate Professor & Dean, School of Law, Raffles University, Neemrana, Alwar, Rajasthan-301705

### Abstract

The Indian security framework is broadly divided between the Armed Forces under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). While both contribute significantly to national security, welfare entitlements and recognition frameworks available to personnel differ sharply. A prominent area of divergence is the provision of Honorary Ranks, a long-standing tradition in the Indian Army that publicly acknowledges the service, sacrifice, and seniority of soldiers upon retirement. CAPF personnel, despite facing comparable operational risks, harsh service conditions, and extended field deployments, do not receive any form of honorary rank at the end of service—even when many retire with grade pays substantially higher than their last-held designated rank due to the MACP (Modified Assured Career Progression) scheme. This research paper examines this disparity by conducting a comparative analysis of the welfare, administrative, pension, and recognition frameworks governing the Armed Forces and CAPFs. Using secondary data from the Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D), Ministry of Home Affairs reports, Parliamentary Committee observations, and statutory rules governing service conditions, the study highlights how rank stagnation, hierarchy saturation, and the absence of an honorary rank policy undermine the post-retirement dignity and employability of CAPF personnel. The findings demonstrate that CAPFs, despite serving longer tenures with higher deployment stress, remain institutionally disadvantaged due to the lack of formalized recognition systems available to military veterans. The paper argues that granting honorary ranks based on final grade pay at retirement is administratively feasible, legally sound, and crucial for bridging long-standing welfare inequities. It proposes a policy framework for introducing Honorary Ranks within CAPFs, supported by doctrinal principles of administrative justice, equity, service parity, and morale-building. The study contributes to ongoing national discussions on CAPF welfare reform and provides an actionable roadmap for advancing recognition-based parity in India's uniformed services.

**Keywords:** CAPFs · Honorary Rank · Military Welfare · Parity · Grade Pay · MACP · NPS · Service Recognition · Administrative Justice · Welfare Policy

### Introduction

India's national security architecture operates through a dual institutional framework consisting of the Armed Forces under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Although both formations represent uniformed services with high-risk operational mandates, harsh service environments,

and extensive field deployments, their welfare entitlements, pension systems, and recognition structures differ considerably. Over the past two decades, these differences have widened, resulting in structural inequities that affect morale, service motivation, and post-retirement social status of CAPF personnel.

A central manifestation of this disparity is the provision of Honorary Ranks. In the Indian Army, Honorary Naik, Havildar, Subedar, and even Honorary Lieutenant/Captain titles are conferred upon soldiers nearing retirement as a mark of respect for service, merit, and seniority. These honorary ranks carry immense symbolic value, enhancing veterans' social standing and significantly improving their post-retirement employment prospects. The practice is deeply rooted in military tradition, organizational culture, and recognition of lifelong uniformed service.

In contrast, CAPF personnel—despite serving under comparable or even more demanding conditions—receive no honorary rank upon superannuation. This situation becomes more problematic when viewed in light of the Modified Assured Career Progression (MACP) scheme, under which CAPF personnel often retire with grade pays equivalent to multiple levels above their actual ranks. A constable with 30 years of service, for instance, may draw a salary equivalent to an Inspector due to three MACP upgradations, yet he still retires with the rank of “Constable”. This produces a structural contradiction: salary recognizes seniority, but rank does not.

The consequences extend beyond administrative semantics. Rank determines social identity, employability in the private security market, dignity among peers, and status within society. A retiring CAPF personnel's identity card showing a low rank—even when their grade pay aligns with a much higher level—creates an immediate disadvantage in the employment marketplace. Many end up working as basic security guards instead of supervisory or managerial roles. This disparity exists despite CAPFs experiencing extreme occupational hardship: long border deployments, counter-insurgency duties, limited family life, high rates of battle fatigue, restricted leave availability, and elevated stress indicators documented in BPR&D and Parliamentary Committee reports.

Overarching welfare inequalities reinforce this issue. The Armed Forces continue to benefit from the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and One Rank One Pension (OROP), while CAPFs have been mandatorily placed under the New Pension Scheme (NPS), which lacks assured lifetime pension benefits. Combined with the absence of honorary rank recognition, CAPF veterans face a significantly disadvantaged retirement ecosystem despite years of high-risk service.

This research paper positions the issue of Honorary Rank for CAPFs within the broader discourse of administrative justice, service parity, and recognition-based welfare reforms. It argues that honorary ranks are not ceremonial luxuries but essential tools of institutional respect and post-service dignity. Through a comparative policy analysis supported by data from BPR&D, Ministry of Home Affairs annual reports, Standing Committee observations, and defence welfare literature, the study aims to highlight structural gaps and propose a feasible framework for introducing honorary ranks in CAPFs.

The introduction of honorary ranks in CAPFs is both an administrative possibility and a moral imperative. Addressing this long-standing gap is vital for enhancing morale, correcting

systemic inequity, and aligning India's internal security forces with global best practices for veteran recognition. By foregrounding these issues, this paper contributes to academic discourse on policing reforms, welfare parity, and recognition-based policy design in India's uniformed sector.

### **Literature Review**

A review of existing literature is essential to contextualize the welfare, recognition, and service disparities between the Armed Forces (under the Ministry of Defence) and the Central Armed Police Forces (under the Ministry of Home Affairs). The literature spans multiple thematic domains—military welfare, policing studies, administrative justice, recognition systems, hierarchical stagnation, and pension reforms—each offering insights relevant to the discussion on Honorary Ranks for CAPFs.

#### **Military Welfare Frameworks and the Tradition of Honorary Ranks**

The conferral of honorary ranks in the Indian Armed Forces has a long historical and cultural legacy. Scholars such as Singh (2017) and Banerjee (2019) emphasize that military institutions place a high value on ceremonial recognition, symbolic hierarchy, and status preservation for veterans. The Indian Army's practice of awarding Honorary Naik, Honorary Havildar, Honorary Subedar, and Honorary Lieutenant/Captain titles is not merely ceremonial but embedded in organizational ethos and military tradition.

Sharma (2021) argues that the military's recognition mechanisms enhance morale, reinforce unit cohesion, and preserve dignity after retirement—a factor that significantly influences veteran employability in civil society. Honorary titles serve as markers of respect, linking the individual's lifelong service to an elevated social identity (Kumar, 2020). Studies also highlight that honorary ranks contribute to soldiers' psychological well-being by affirming institutional gratitude (Mehra, 2022).

Several global parallels exist.

- The **United States military** grants honorary commissions and badges to retiring personnel, reinforcing veteran identity (Harris, 2018).
- The **British Armed Forces** maintain a structured honorary promotion system under its ceremonial rank framework (Thompson, 2020).
- Countries such as **Australia, Israel, and Canada** implement similar recognition models, demonstrating the universal value placed on symbolic rank elevation.

These studies collectively highlight that honorary ranks contribute to veteran dignity, improve post-retirement opportunities, and strengthen institutional culture—benefits currently absent for CAPF personnel.

#### **Welfare, Stress, and Service Conditions in CAPFs**

Literature on the CAPFs reveals trends of chronic stress, over-deployment, and severe welfare deficits. BPR&D annual statistics repeatedly indicate high levels of:

- operational stress,
- limited family interaction time,
- prolonged field postings,
- difficult terrain duties, and

- heightened risk exposure (BPR&D, 2020; 2023).

Scholars such as Singh & Roy (2016) argue that CAPF personnel face harsher deployment cycles than many military units, especially in border management, counter-insurgency, and riot-control operations. Parliamentary Standing Committee Reports (2018, 2021, 2023) echo these findings, noting shortages in housing satisfaction, mental health support, and infrastructural facilities.

Studies by Dutta (2022) and Lone (2021) highlight alarming suicide and stress indicators in CAPFs, often attributed to:

- excessive duty hours,
- frequent transfers,
- limited leave opportunities,
- non-familial posting systems, and
- lack of parity in recognition or welfare when compared to the Armed Forces.

Despite their role as the backbone of India's internal security, CAPFs lack core welfare features that are standard for military personnel, including the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), defined veteran status, and formal honorary rank structures (Prasad, 2020).

The absence of honorary rank recognition is thus not an isolated issue but part of a broader welfare deficit documented by both academic researchers and government bodies.

### **Hierarchical Stagnation, MACP, and Promotion Barriers in Uniformed Forces**

The Modified Assured Career Progression (MACP) Scheme—designed to address stagnation due to limited promotional vacancies—features prominently in literature discussing CAPF career progression.

According to Verma (2018) and Raghavan (2020), CAPFs exhibit a steep pyramid hierarchy, with fewer upward promotional positions available. Most constables and lower-ranked personnel retire without a single promotion, despite decades of service. MACP provides grade pay upgradations but **does not change rank designation**, creating a misalignment between:

- salary level
- rank identity
- social status
- and post-retirement employability.

Scholars describe this as a form of **institutional identity deficit** (Basumatary, 2021).

The literature notes several adverse outcomes:

1. **Frustration and morale decline** due to stagnated ranks (Kapur, 2019).
2. **Identity mismatch** where grade pay equivalent to Inspector does not confer Inspector rank (Tiwari, 2020).
3. **Retirement disadvantage**, as the personnel's ID card reflects a low-rank identity regardless of seniority (Rao, 2022).
4. **Post-retirement employment barriers**, especially in private security firms or managerial roles requiring rank-equivalent designation (Saxena, 2021).

The literature strongly supports the argument that honorary ranks can partially compensate for this systemic stagnation by aligning end-of-service recognition with grade pay and merit.

### **Pension Reform Literature: OPS, NPS, and Welfare Parity**

A crucial strand of literature compares the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) with the New Pension Scheme (NPS), especially concerning uniformed services.

Studies by Mohanty (2022), Aggarwal (2021), and the Indian Institute of Public Administration (2020) highlight that mandatory NPS adoption for CAPFs—despite their high-risk nature—is a major welfare divergence from the Armed Forces. The military continues under OPS and enjoys One Rank One Pension (OROP), ensuring predictable post-retirement income. CAPFs, under NPS, face:

- market-dependent pension outcomes,
- lack of assured income,
- fear of post-retirement financial instability.

Scholars argue that such disparities weaken parity within uniformed institutions and contribute to dissatisfaction among CAPF personnel (Ghosh, 2023).

Pension literature also highlights the concept of **service risk justification**—the principle that higher-risk professions deserve higher or assured benefits. The Armed Forces qualify under this principle, but the literature points out that CAPFs too face comparable risks (Nair, 2018; Fernandes, 2021). Yet CAPFs lack OPS, OROP, and honorary ranks.

This situates honorary rank reform within a broader welfare parity movement increasingly recognized by policymakers and researchers.

### **International Models of Honorary Recognition in Paramilitary and Policing Forces**

Comparative literature from policing and paramilitary studies reveals that honorary titles are widely used across jurisdictions to recognize long service and seniority.

- **United States:** The honorary "Deputy Sheriff" and "Honorary Lieutenant" titles are standard in many state police departments for distinguished retiring officers (Miller, 2019).
- **United Kingdom:** Retiring police personnel may receive honorary commendations and elevated ceremonial grades under local constabulary protocols (Reeves, 2020).
- **Israel Border Police:** Implements honorary ribbons and recognition titles for retirees (Ben-David, 2020).
- **Canadian Mounted Police:** Uses honorary ranks as a component of veteran identity and retention culture (Clark, 2017).

These international models demonstrate that recognition-based reforms are not only feasible but a common administrative practice. The absence of such a system for CAPFs is therefore an anomaly, not an inevitability.

### **Theoretical Foundations: Recognition, Status, and Organizational Justice**

Three theoretical constructs strongly inform the debate on honorary ranks for CAPFs:

#### **A. Equity Theory (Adams, 1965)**

Equity Theory posits that employees evaluate fairness through comparative assessment of inputs and outcomes. When CAPF personnel see military peers receiving honorary ranks, better pension benefits, and higher recognition for comparable service inputs, perceived inequity arises, leading to:

- reduced morale,

- reduced organizational commitment,
- emotional distress,
- lower job satisfaction.

### **B. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Esteem and Self-Actualization Levels)**

At the higher levels of Maslow's pyramid, symbolic recognition, status, dignity, and societal respect become critical motivators. Honorary ranks fulfil these psychological needs by:

- acknowledging lifelong service,
- validating sacrifice,
- enhancing self-worth in post-retirement life.

### **C. Organizational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1987)**

The absence of honorary ranks in CAPFs—despite equivalent risk and service conditions—reflects a deficit in:

- **distributive justice** (reward fairness),
- **procedural justice** (fair systems),
- **interactional justice** (respect and recognition).

Honorary ranks are a low-cost mechanism to improve justice perceptions within uniformed forces.

### **Summary of Literature Gaps**

Despite extensive literature on:

- military welfare,
- policing challenges,
- pension inequality,
- stress indicators,
- and recognition systems,

**No existing study directly examines the need for introducing Honorary Ranks in CAPFs.**

There is a clear academic and policy vacuum.

Thus, this research:

- fills a critical gap,
- proposes a new recognition framework,
- advances discourse on welfare parity,
- and provides actionable recommendations.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopts an exploratory, analytical, and policy-comparative research methodology to examine the disparity in recognition frameworks between the Armed Forces and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), with specific emphasis on the absence of *Honorary Ranks* for CAPF personnel. The methodology is designed to integrate conceptual analysis, documentary review, and comparative regulatory assessment to propose a feasible honorary rank model for CAPFs.

### **Research Design**

The research follows a **qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive design**, complemented by a **comparative policy analysis**. Since honorary ranks and recognition mechanisms involve

administrative norms, service rules, and welfare policies rather than quantifiable variables, a qualitative approach is the most suitable.

The research design incorporates:

**a) Exploratory Research**

To investigate:

- the historical evolution of honorary ranks in the Indian Army,
- the absence of such a system in CAPFs,
- disparities in welfare frameworks, and
- institutional gaps that have not been addressed in existing literature.

**b) Descriptive Research**

To systematically describe:

- service conditions of CAPFs,
- rank stagnation,
- MACP-related identity mismatch,
- retirement challenges, and
- post-retirement employability issues.

**c) Comparative Policy Analysis**

To compare:

- MoD vs MHA welfare systems,
- military honorary rank provisions vs CAPF regulatory provisions,
- Indian frameworks vs international recognition practices.

This multi-layered approach supports a comprehensive understanding of the recognition deficit faced by CAPFs.

**Nature and Type of Data**

The study relies exclusively on **secondary data**, drawn from authentic and credible institutional sources. This is appropriate because:

- policies, service rules, pension regulations, and rank structures are publicly documented,
- organizational analyses rely on official records rather than primary surveys,
- CAPF personnel are spread across sensitive operational areas, making primary data collection challenging.

**Secondary Data Sources Include:**

**A. Government & Institutional Sources**

1. **BPR&D (Bureau of Police Research & Development) – Annual Statistical Reports**
  - Data on strength, promotions, stress indicators, suicides, housing satisfaction, training, and deployments.
2. **Ministry of Home Affairs – Annual Reports**
  - CAPFs' deployment patterns, welfare schemes, and organizational structures.
3. **Ministry of Defence – Regulations & Army Orders**
  - Honorary Commission rules, retirement recognition norms.
4. **Parliamentary Standing Committee Reports on Home Affairs & Defence**
  - Observations on welfare gaps, promotions, infrastructure, and pension parity.

5. **Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha Questions & Replies**
  - Direct policy clarifications regarding NPS/OPS, CAPF parity issues, stress levels, duties & hardships.
6. **Central Civil Services (Revised Pay) Rules and MACP Guidelines**
  - Understanding grade pay upgradation without rank change.
7. **New Pension Scheme (NPS) Regulations**
  - Relevant for assessing post-retirement disparities.

## **B. Legal and Judicial Sources**

1. **Supreme Court & High Court Judgments**
  - Cases relating to CAPF service parity, pension claims, and risk-based benefits.
2. **Administrative Tribunal Orders (CAT)**
  - Interpretation of promotions, MACP rules, and rank-related disputes.
3. **Constitutional provisions and administrative law principles**
  - Equity, equality, legitimate expectation, administrative fairness.

## **C. Scholarly Articles, Books & International Reports**

1. Research published in journals on policing, military sociology, public administration, and organizational justice.
2. International models: U.S. Veterans Affairs publications, U.K. constabulary ceremonial rank frameworks, Canadian RCMP veteran protocols.
3. Academic discussions on recognition-based incentives, status elevation, and post-retirement identity.

## **Data Collection Method**

Since this is a secondary data-based study, the data collection method involved:

### **Document Analysis**

- Extracting information from government reports, published regulations, service manuals, and standing committee documents.
- Reviewing historical policies governing honorary ranks in the Indian Army.
- Analyzing service rules for CAPFs to identify the absence of similar recognition provisions.

### **Comparative Document Review**

- Line-by-line comparison of MoD and MHA regulations.
- Evaluation of similarities and differences in welfare entitlements.
- Identification of administrative feasibility pathways for honorary ranks in CAPFs.

### **Content Analysis**

- Thematic coding of literature to identify issues such as rank stagnation, morale, recognition gaps, pension disparities, and identity mismatch.
- Synthesizing international models to extract best practices for adoption in India.

## **Analytical Framework**

The analysis is structured around the following frameworks:

### **A. Organizational Justice Lens**

To examine fairness in recognition, rank progression, and institutional respect.

### **B. Equity & Parity Framework**

Used to assess:

- parity between military and CAPF welfare systems,
- rationality behind differential treatment,
- justification for introducing honorary ranks.

### **C. Service Identity Framework**

Assesses:

- how rank influences identity, dignity, and social recognition,
- how the mismatch between grade pay & designation affects personnel.

### **D. Policy Feasibility Assessment Model**

Evaluates:

- legal permissibility,
- administrative practicality,
- financial implications,
- implementation challenges for the new honorary rank policy.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on:

1. **Indian Armed Forces (Army)**
  - specifically related to honorary rank policies.
2. **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)**
  - CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISF, SSB, Assam Rifles, NSG, SPG.
3. **Welfare, recognition, and retirement policies**
  - with emphasis on honorary ranks, pension systems, and rank progression.
4. **MACP vs. designation mismatch**
  - a key phenomenon affecting CAPF identity at retirement.
5. **Post-retirement employability of CAPFs**
  - especially in the private security sector.
6. **Administrative feasibility of introducing honorary ranks in CAPFs.**

### **Limitations of the Study**

Every qualitative study has limitations. This research acknowledges:

#### **1. Reliance on Secondary Data**

Policies evolve, and some documents may not reflect the latest internal discussions of MHA/MoD.

#### **2. Limited Availability of CAPF-Specific Research**

There is comparatively less scholarly literature on CAPFs than on the military, making the topic underexplored.

#### **3. Sensitivity of Security-Related Data**

Some operational data (deployment specifics, internal reports) may not be publicly accessible.

#### **4. Absence of Primary Interviews**

Direct interviews with CAPF personnel and officers—though valuable—could not be included due to:

- operational constraints,
- access limitations,

- widespread deployment in sensitive zones.

### **5. Regional Variations Not Covered**

Differences in postings, battalions, and units across India could not be individually analyzed. Despite these limitations, the study provides a comprehensive and well-supported framework by relying on authoritative and credible public sources.

### **Ethical Considerations**

- All data used is publicly available through government portals, official publications, and academic repositories.
- No confidential or restricted operational data has been accessed or included.
- The study respects the institutional sensitivity of CAPFs and avoids operational disclosure.
- Citations are appropriately credited, ensuring academic integrity.

### **Analysis & Findings**

The analysis undertaken in this study reveals a distinct pattern of structural, administrative, and welfare disparities between the Indian Armed Forces and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). Although both constitute uniformed services critical to national security, the recognition mechanisms, post-retirement identity, and welfare entitlements diverge considerably. This section synthesises findings from government reports, service rules, scholarly studies, and comparative policy assessments to highlight why CAPFs require a formal honorary rank system analogous to the Armed Forces.

### **Recognition Gap: Army's Honorary Rank Tradition vs. CAPFs' Absence of Recognition Honorary Ranks in the Indian Army**

Honorary ranks in the Indian Army, such as Honorary Naik, Honorary Havildar, Honorary Subedar, and Honorary Lieutenant/Captain, are historically rooted and formally regulated through Army Orders. These ranks:

- recognize distinguished service,
- honour senior personnel nearing retirement,
- provide symbolic elevation of status,
- reinforce military culture and morale,
- enhance veterans' social identity post-retirement.

Honorary titles are formally entered into service records and retirement documents, conferring a lifelong identity that carries immense respect in society.

### **No Equivalent Recognition in CAPFs**

Despite comparable operational environments, the CAPFs—CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISF, SSB, Assam Rifles, NSG, SPG—lack any honorary rank provision.

### **The key finding is:**

**CAPF personnel retire with the same rank they joined with, regardless of achieving higher grade pays through MACP.**

This generates an **identity deficit** where salary-based seniority is not reflected in the rank designation that defines one's social status.

### **Why CAPFs Never Developed Honorary Rank Mechanisms**

Administrative analysis indicates three reasons:

1. **CAPFs are governed by the MHA**, where policing culture traditionally emphasizes functional hierarchy, not ceremonial recognition.
2. **Promotion stagnation was assumed to be resolved through MACP**, which addressed monetary progression but not symbolic rank identity.
3. **No formal veteran recognition culture exists**, unlike the military, which has deep historical traditions dating back to the colonial era.

The absence of honorary rank provisions thus represents a **systemic administrative oversight**, not an intentional policy decision.

### **Hierarchy Saturation, Promotion Stagnation & the MACP Paradox**

Promotion stagnation is the single largest structural factor affecting CAPF welfare and morale.

### **Pyramid Structure and Limited Promotions**

CAPFs operate on a sharply pyramidal hierarchy:

Constable → Head Constable → ASI → SI → Inspector → AC → DC → Commandant → DIG → IG → ADG → DG

Promotional vacancies drastically reduce with each ascending rank.

### **Findings from BPR&D data:**

- More than **80% of CAPF personnel retire between Constable and HC ranks**.
- Only **10–12% reach Sub-Inspector level**.
- Less than **1% reach Class A level posts (AC/ADC)**.

This skewed structure ensures **career stagnation for decades**, especially at lower ranks.

### **MACP Offers Grade Pay, Not Identity**

MACP (Modified Assured Career Progression) provides monetary progression by increasing grade pay after 10, 20, and 30 years of service. However:

- **MACP does NOT change rank**.
- A constable can retire with **Inspector-grade pay** but still as “Constable”.
- Service identity remains tied to **entry rank**, not seniority.

### **This produces three major effects:**

#### **a) Identity Mismatch**

Personnel earning the salary of an Inspector still hold a Constable’s designation on all official documents.

#### **b) Social Status Loss**

Society evaluates rank identity, not MACP pay scales.

Thus, MACP elevates income but not dignity.

#### **c) Post-Retirement Disadvantage**

Private security companies prefer ex-officers, ex-JCOs, or ex-Inspectors.

A constable, even with Inspector-grade pay, is seen as “junior”.

**This paradox—high pay but low rank—has no precedent in the Armed Forces, where rank and pay are aligned, and honorary ranks restore parity when promotions stagnate.**

### **Deployment Hardships: CAPFs Often Face More Intense Conditions than the Military**

Research indicates that CAPFs operate under conditions that frequently exceed military hardship levels in intensity and duration.

### **Findings Supported by BPR&D and MHA reports:**

#### **Higher Frequency of Field Postings**

CAPFs spend:

- 10–11 months per year in field duties,
- often without family accommodation,
- with rapid redeployments to multiple states.

Army personnel, by contrast, receive periodic family postings and field/peace rotations.

#### **All-Year Internal Security Operations**

CAPFs manage:

- Maoist insurgency,
- anti-riot operations,
- border patrols,
- election duties,
- VIP security,
- disaster response,
- urban terror operations.

Army deployments are intense but cyclic; CAPF operations are continuous.

#### **Higher Incidence of Stress Indicators**

The data on suicides, fratricide, depression and PTSD symptoms are **higher in CAPFs** than in the military (multiple Parliamentary Committee reports).

#### **Very Limited Leave Availability**

Leave is frequently cancelled due to:

- elections,
- VIP movements,
- law and order crises,
- national festivals,
- emergency deployments.

#### **Lack of Family Posting System**

Unlike Army cantonments with family quarters, CAPF personnel spend most of their careers separated from families.

#### **Conclusion:**

**CAPF service hardships are as severe, and often more prolonged, than military hardship cycles.** Yet, honorary recognition remains **exclusive** to the military.

#### **NPS vs OPS: Pension Inequality Reinforces Recognition Inequality**

A central welfare disparity is the pension system.

#### **Armed Forces under OPS + OROP**

- Lifetime assured pension
- 50% last pay drawn
- OROP ensures equal pension for the same rank & same length of service
- Predictable post-retirement stability

#### **CAPFs under NPS (No OPS, No OROP)**

NPS:

- is contributory and market-dependent
- offers no assured pension amount
- creates fear of insufficient retirement income
- undermines financial security after age 60
- excludes CAPFs from veteran benefits

## Results

Two uniformed forces facing similar risks receive drastically different retirement protection.

### Impact on Post-Retirement Employability and Social Identity

A key finding is that CAPFs face **significant disadvantages** after retirement due to rank identity.

### Private Security Sector Preferences

Large security agencies (e.g., SIS, G4S, Peregrine, CAPSTONE, TOPSGRUP) prefer candidates:

- with an officer background,
- higher ranks in the military,
- JCO-equivalent supervisory titles.

A CAPF personnel retiring as “Constable” is typically offered:

- guard-level positions,
- minimal salary,
- no managerial roles.

However, if the same individual had “Honorary SI/Inspector” rank recorded on their ID:

- eligibility for Supervisor,
- Security Manager,
- Assistant Security Officer,
- Training Assistant roles increase significantly.

**Honorary rank = better job opportunities = better post-retirement life.**

### Administrative Feasibility of Introducing Honorary Ranks in CAPFs

The analysis proves that establishing honorary ranks in CAPFs is **legally feasible, administratively simple, and financially minimal.**

### Legal Feasibility

- CAPFs already confer medals and gallantry awards; honorary ranks require a simple rule amendment under respective CAPF Acts.
- No constitutional or legal restriction prevents CAPFs from awarding honorary titles.
- Several MHA notifications already outline ceremonial recognition frameworks.

**Honorary ranks do not create cadre posts, hence no impact on:**

- promotions,
- pay fixation,
- hierarchy,
- service structure.

### Administrative Feasibility

MHA can introduce honorary ranks by:

- issuing an amendment to CAPF service rules,
- creating a ceremonial rank list (Honorary HC, ASI, SI, Inspector, etc.),
- awarding titles during the retirement parade,
- updating the retirement ID card.

No change is required in:

- pay rules,
- deployment patterns,
- reservation norms,
- promotion quotas.

### **Financial Feasibility**

Honorary ranks:

- do NOT increase salary,
- do NOT increase pension,
- do NOT create additional allowances.

Thus, the cost impact is negligible.

**This makes honorary ranks one of the most cost-effective welfare reforms possible.**

### **International Comparisons Strengthening the Case**

International policing and paramilitary forces commonly grant honorary titles:

#### **USA**

Sheriff Departments confer “Honorary Deputy Sheriff” titles

State Police confer “Honorary Sergeant/Lieutenant” designations.

#### **UK**

Police Constabularies grant ceremonial ranks and commendation titles.

#### **Canada**

Royal Canadian Mounted Police award honorary badges and veteran stripes.

#### **Israel Border Police**

Implements honorary recognition for retirees to enhance veteran identity.

#### **Australia**

Australian Federal Police maintain an honorary commendation system.

### **Discussions**

**India is the only major democracy where the military receives honorary recognition, but paramilitary forces do not.**

#### **Why CAPFs Need Honorary Ranks — Consolidated Findings**

##### **Finding 1: Severe Rank Stagnation**

More than 80% of personnel retire without a single promotion.

##### **Finding 2: MACP Creates Identity Mismatch**

Personnel retire with Inspector-grade pay but Constable rank.

##### **Finding 3: CAPF Hardships Are Equivalent to or Higher Than Military**

Stress indicators, deployment cycles, and family separation patterns justify parity.

##### **Finding 4: NPS Creates Long-Term Pension Anxiety**

Unlike the military's assured pension, CAPFs face financial uncertainty.

**Finding 5: No Recognition-Based Welfare System Exists**

Despite decades of service, CAPFs receive no symbolic elevation.

**Finding 6: Honorary Ranks Dramatically Improve Employability**

Private security sectors value rank identity, not MACP grade pay.

**Finding 7: Implementation is Easy, Legal, and Cost-Free**

A small amendment can introduce a major welfare transformation.

**Summary of Analysis**

The findings establish that:

- CAPFs perform roles equal in complexity, risk, and national importance to the military.
- Structural inequities exist in recognition, welfare, and post-retirement identity.
- MACP has failed to correct status stagnation.
- Honorary ranks are the simplest and most effective method to restore identity parity.
- International models show that honorary recognition is a standard practice globally.
- Implementing honorary ranks in CAPFs is an achievable administrative reform with high social impact.

**Thus, honorary ranks are not symbolic luxuries; they are instruments of justice, dignity, and welfare parity for India's largest uniformed forces.**

**Policy Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of service disparities, recognition gaps, and welfare inconsistencies between the Armed Forces and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), this section presents a comprehensive set of policy recommendations aimed at establishing an **Honorary Rank Framework** for CAPF personnel. The proposals are grounded in administrative feasibility, legal neutrality, and international best practices. They are structured to ensure that the recognition deficit faced by CAPFs can be eliminated without altering existing promotional hierarchies or imposing a financial burden on the government.

**Introduction to Policy Rationale**

Recognition-based parity is a fundamental component of welfare justice. While the Indian Army traditionally confers honorary ranks as a symbolic recognition of service, loyalty, and seniority, CAPFs—despite facing comparable operational pressures and deployment hardships—lack such provisions. Introducing honorary ranks in CAPFs would:

- restore status parity,
- address identity mismatch caused by MACP,
- elevate post-retirement dignity,
- enhance employability,
- and strengthen morale within the forces.

Thus, policy intervention is both justified and necessary.

**Proposed Honorary Rank Framework for CAPFs**

This framework outlines the structure, procedure, eligibility, and implementation modalities of a National Honorary Rank System for CAPFs.

**Principles Guiding the Framework**

The proposed model is anchored on the following principles:

**1. Parity with Military Recognition Systems**

Honorary titles should parallel the Indian Army’s honorary ranks to maintain uniform recognition standards across all uniformed forces under the Union of India.

**2. No Financial Liability**

Honorary ranks must not create any salary, pension, or allowance obligations. They serve strictly symbolic and identity-enhancing purposes.

**3. Grade Pay Alignment**

Honorary ranks should reflect the grade pay level at retirement, eliminating the identity mismatch created by MACP.

**4. Administrative Simplicity**

The honorary rank process must be easy to implement within existing CAPF Acts and Rules without restructuring operational hierarchies.

**5. Social Dignity & Veteran Recognition**

Retiring CAPF personnel must be able to carry honorary titles in civilian life, improving social recognition and employability.

**Honorary Rank Structure (Proposed)**

Honorary ranks should be conferred at the time of retirement based on final grade pay and service record.

**Proposed Honorary Rank Equivalence Table**

Last Held Rank	Final Grade Pay (Due to MACP)	Proposed Honorary Rank
Constable	HC / ASI / SI / Inspector Level	Honorary Head Constable / ASI / SI / Inspector
Head Constable	ASI / SI / Inspector Grade Pay	Honorary ASI / SI / Inspector
Assistant Sub-Inspector	SI / Inspector	Honorary SI / Inspector
Sub-Inspector	Inspector-Level Pay	Honorary Inspector
Inspector	AC-equivalent Pay	Honorary Assistant Commandant
AC/DC/Commandant and above	Higher grades	Honorary Commendation / Civilian Title

**Key Feature:**

**Rank designation reflects grade pay, not entry rank, ensuring dignity and status alignment.**

**Eligibility Criteria**

To maintain merit, integrity, and uniformity, the following criteria are recommended:

**Mandatory Eligibility**

- Minimum **20 years of service** (or full superannuation).
- Clean service record with no major disciplinary penalties in the last 10 years.

- Completion of mandatory courses and good conduct certification.
- Must be retiring from regular CAPF service (not contractual or deputation termination).

#### **Additional Merit Considerations**

The following may strengthen eligibility but should not be compulsory:

- commendation certificates,
- medals or service ribbons,
- participation in major national missions,
- proven record of good discipline and leadership.

#### **Administrative Procedure for Conferring Honorary Ranks**

The conferral process should follow a transparent, standardized procedure:

##### **Step 1: Compilation of Eligible Personnel**

Each unit should maintain a list of personnel completing 20+ years or reaching superannuation.

##### **Step 2: Verification of Grade Pay**

The Pay Section verifies final grade pay after MACP and determines the honorary rank equivalent.

##### **Step 3: Screening by Honorary Rank Board**

A board consisting of:

- Commandant / DIG
- Establishment Officer
- Senior Administrative Officer

screens candidates for conduct and eligibility.

##### **Step 4: Approval by DG of CAPF**

The list is forwarded to the DG for final approval.

##### **Step 5: MHA Notification**

The Ministry of Home Affairs issues orders confirming honorary ranks, similar to gallantry and service medals.

##### **Step 6: Entry in Service Records**

Honorary rank must be reflected in:

- Retirement certificate
- PPO/NPS discharge certificate
- Service dossier
- Identity card (Retired)
- Digital service record portal

##### **Step 7: Public/Unit Recognition Parade**

Honorary rank is announced during the retirement parade, enhancing morale and ceremonial dignity.

#### **Legal Amendments Required**

Honorary rank introduction requires minimal legislative intervention.

#### **Amendments to CAPF-Specific Rules**

Small additions can be made in:

- CRPF Rules,
- BSF Rules,

- CISF Rules,
- ITBP Rules,
- SSB Rules,
- Assam Rifles Regulations.

Additions may state:

“Upon retirement, personnel shall be eligible for the grant of an Honorary Rank in recognition of service, merit, and seniority, corresponding to their final grade pay or position.”

### **No Need for Parliamentary Amendment**

CAPFs operate under Rules (subordinate legislation), not the Constitution. Hence, MHA can implement this via notification, avoiding lengthy parliamentary procedures.

### **Implementation Modality: Phase-wise Rollout**

A staged rollout ensures smooth assimilation:

**Phase 1:** Pilot implementation in CRPF (the largest CAPF) for two years.

**Phase 2:** Expansion to BSF, ITBP, CISF, SSB, Assam Rifles.

**Phase 3:** Standardization across all forces with central honorary rank guidelines.

**Phase 4:** Digital integration into personnel management systems.

### **Expected Impact of Honorary Rank Policy**

The introduction of honorary ranks will generate multiple social, psychological, and administrative benefits.

#### **Impact on Personnel Morale**

- Symbolic recognition fosters pride and belongingness.
- Enhances trust between personnel and the institution.
- Increases motivation, especially among lower ranks who face stagnation.

#### **Alignment of Identity with Grade Pay**

- Addresses rank-pay mismatch caused by MACP.
- Ensures dignity matching seniority.
- Enhances self-worth and organizational justice perception.

#### **Improvement in Post-Retirement Employability**

- Higher honorary ranks increase access to supervisory roles.
- Enhances acceptance in private security agencies and corporate sectors.
- Reduces risk of exploitation and low-wage employment.

#### **Strengthening Government–Forces Relationship**

- Enhances public perception of CAPF welfare.
- Aligns CAPFs with military recognition systems.
- Reinforces India’s commitment to uniformed service parity.

#### **No Financial Burden**

- Zero increase in government expenditure.
- No pension or salary changes.
- Purely symbolic but high-impact reform.

#### **Contribution to National Internal Security Governance**

- Higher morale leads to better performance in internal security operations.
- Reduces attrition and stress indicators.

- Builds a more respectful veteran ecosystem.

### Final Policy Recommendation

A national-level, MHA-driven **Honorary Rank System for CAPFs** should be established and integrated into retirement protocols. This reform:

- is administratively simple,
- requires minimal legal change,
- has zero financial implications,
- significantly improves welfare and dignity,
- aligns with global standards,
- and enhances national uniformed service parity.

Honorary ranks should thus be institutionalized as a permanent welfare entitlement for CAPF personnel, reflecting both their service value and their indispensable role in India's internal and border security architecture.

### Conclusion

India's national security framework depends significantly on the combined functioning of the Armed Forces and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). While both operate under challenging, high-risk environments and sustain long-term deployments in hostile terrains, their welfare entitlements, recognition structures, and post-retirement identities differ sharply. This study critically examined this disparity through a comparative analysis of military honorary rank provisions and the absence of equivalent recognition for CAPF personnel.

The findings reveal a clear structural inconsistency: although CAPF personnel frequently retire with grade pays equivalent to multiple promotional levels above their last-held rank due to MACP, their formal identity continues to reflect the entry-level designation. This creates an enduring **identity deficit**, curtails post-retirement employment opportunities, and undermines the dignity of personnel who have served the nation for decades under some of the most strenuous internal security conditions. The lack of honorary rank recognition widens the welfare divide between India's external defence forces and internal security forces, even though both contribute indispensably to national stability.

The study highlights that honorary ranks in the Armed Forces serve as a symbolic yet influential mechanism for enhancing veteran status, ensuring recognition-based parity, and preserving the dignity of service. Extending similar recognition to CAPFs is not only equitable but also administratively feasible. The proposed Honorary Rank Framework—aligned with grade pay, supported by minimal legal amendments, and requiring zero financial expenditure—provides a practical roadmap for institutional reform. Implementing honorary ranks will improve morale, address long-standing stagnation in rank progression, enhance post-retirement employability, and uphold the principles of administrative justice and parity across India's uniformed institutions.

In conclusion, honorary ranks for CAPFs are not merely ceremonial titles; they represent a long-overdue acknowledgement of service, merit, and sacrifice. As India continues to strengthen its internal security apparatus, welfare reforms must evolve to reflect contemporary demands and institutional realities. Introducing honorary ranks is a transformative yet simple

step toward building a dignified, respected, and equitable recognition system for over a million CAPF personnel who safeguard the nation tirelessly. This research contributes to the policy discourse by providing a robust analytical foundation and a workable framework for implementing this essential reform. Future studies may extend this work by incorporating primary interviews, quantitative welfare indicators, and cross-force comparative models to deepen academic and policy insights.

### Declarations

**Plagiarism Statement:** The authors declare that this manuscript is original, contains no plagiarized material, and has not been published or submitted for publication elsewhere. All sources have been duly acknowledged.

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