Chapter 6

The Anglo-Indians in a Plural Society

In India people of diverse religions, cultures and languages have lived together for centuries. In fact, there is no society in the contemporary world with such an overwhelming cultural diversity as ours. According to the estimates of a project of the Anthropological Survey of India, there are 4,635 separate communities in India with as many as 325 languages and 25 scripts.¹ In fact, pluralism, as rightly pointed out by Kothari, “has been a part of India’s tradition and culture, inherent in its distinctive view of religiosity that draws inspiration from different faiths.”² The distinctive feature of Indian plurality is the state’s concern for cultural differences and its accommodation of diversity in the public domain. The National Anthem itself indicates explicitly about the Indian diversity. Moreover, constitutional pluralism is based on secular citizenship and guaranteed inclusion and at the same time provides autonomy to communities and cultural identities in the public realm. Based on the ‘principle of inclusion’, the Indian state has bestowed constitutional recognition on the rights of minority communities. These rights consist of religious freedom, including the right to worship, propagate and practice one’s religion. Moreover, it also encompasses the freedom to establish religious, cultural and educational institutions of their

¹ N.K. Das, ‘People of India and Indian Anthropology,’ Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 41 No. 29 July 22 - July 28, 2006, P 3157-8. Also see www.epw.org.in
choice. Minority rights have been granted primarily to ensure equal status in the public realm. The recognition of political and institutional measures to accommodate the minorities in our constitution has led scholars to assert that “the sum total of the provisions for the minorities make our state more secular than even the United States of America.”

The minority groups that have been listed in the Indian Constitution are the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Anglo-Indians and Parsis. These are recognised as separate groups or minorities and are treated equally with the other communities, including the major ones. All this was accomplished on account of the efforts of the nationalist elites who had a vision and commitment to accommodate and weave the diverse identities in an honorable manner. In fact, the nation builders of our country believed that it was the responsibility of the nation-state to accommodate the enormous diversities and encourage values of tolerance, pluralism and inclusion to ward off discrimination or injustice to the less numerous or minor groups. If Gandhiji emphasized, “the weakest should have the same opportunities as

3 Article 29. Protection of interests of minorities-(1) Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to observe the same. (2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

Article 30. Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions- (1) All minorities whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. (2) The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.


the strongest,"6 Jayaprakash Narayan proposed to develop a “communitarian democracy which alone could guarantee participatory democracy.”7 Likewise, Jawaharlal Nehru wanted the foundation of a secular state that “protects all religions, but does not favour one at the expense of others and does not itself adopt any religion as the state religion.”8 “The government of a country like India,” Nehru said, “with many religions can never function satisfactorily in the modern age except on a secular basis.”9 Ram Manohar Lohia felt that to make democracy a reality, “the state would have to be so organised and power so diffused that each community in it lived the way of life that it chose.”10

In the realms of philosophy, most scholars, in one way or the other, have recognised the importance of diversity and to ward off discrimination against minorities have also been inclined to the resisting of majority. Mahatma Gandhi also believed that the rule of the majority had a narrow application and it was slavery to be amenable to the majority, no matter what its decisions were. According to him, “Swaraj will be an absurdity if individuals have to surrender their judgment to majority.”11 Democracy does not mean ascendancy of the majority group and its ability thereby to persuade other minor groups to see the world in terms favorable to its own ascendancy. Since equality is the hallmark of a democratic process, scholars like Bhiku Parikh, while dilating upon cultural pluralism, maintain:

9 Ibid., P.247.
“Multiculturalism doesn't simply mean numerical plurality of different cultures, but rather a community which is creating, guaranteeing, encouraging spaces within which different communities are able to grow at their pace. At the same time it means creating a public space in which these communities are able to interact, enrich the existing culture and create a new consensual culture in which they recognize reflections of their own identity.”  

Similarly some, with a view to ensuring equality, stress on the autonomy and integrity of distinct cultures. Scholars like T.H. Marshall emphasize on “a full and equal membership of citizens in a political community.” Likewise, Gurpreet Mahajan maintains that “many cultural communities that are present in our society must live as equals in the public domain.” It may also be said that democracy not only values the principle of non-discrimination but also aims at ensuring that socially ascribed identities such as caste, community, religion, race and gender are not a source of discrimination and disadvantage in the public domain. The common thread that runs through all the scholarly works is the concern for equality of diverse groups that co-exist in a society. However, the probes into the matter by scholars have shown that the democratic setup has been “less than capable of handling the problems of multicultural and heterogeneous societies.” Some believe that pluralism, has been hijacked

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“by monotheist and centripetal social and political ideologies.” 17 Regarding this, the role of the numerically dominant groups, (national or regional), which compete for establishing their control in the realms of decision-making and governance, has been equally problematic. As a matter of fact, the minority groups have often alleged that the actions of the majority have been discriminatory against them. On occasions, they have even expressed a sense of insecurity, fearing that the majority may absorb them. Apart from this, the micro groups have not only sensed discriminatory behaviour of the majority but also of the major minority groups at the local levels. Broadly, if at the national level the dominant Hindus are blamed for ignoring the minorities, at the state and local levels the dominant minority groups in their respective areas are accused of cornering the major benefits at the cost of the micro minority groups. This may be illustrated by the socio-economic and political scenario in states like Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. Apart from this, the major minorities like Muslims, Christians and Sikhs, on account of their respective vote-bank and political organisations, have received relatively better attention of the ruling elites than the tiny groups like Anglo-Indians. Off and on, matters concerning the major identities have occupied the central place in discussions and deliberations at the state and national levels. Besides, their problems have often made headlines in newspapers. The issues of state autonomy or for that matter, differential treatment on the basis of caste and community may be cited in this regard. Conversely, the numerically insignificant groups in the country like the Anglo-Indians, on account of their being a micro entity, never figure or get any public space or mention in the power circles or press and electronic media.

Despite the safeguards, as contained in the Constitution, the majoritarian aspect of democracy appears to have overshadowed the minor entities and their aspirations for equality. This has obviously placed the micro ethnic and cultural minorities at a disadvantage in the public arena. ‘It is seen that the majoritarian tendency of Indian democracy, has also retarded the process of secularization which ensures protection of rights of diverse groups, specially minority rights.’ Majoritarianism negates the basic principle of democratic egalitarianism and rights and more often than not rescinds the legitimacy of minority identities. In fact, majoritarianism renders representative institutions “open to the charge that they function in ways that give majorities greater purchase in the polity and also undermine the constitutional guarantees of equal citizenship enjoyed by individuals belonging to minority social groups, however defined.” Similarly, Lijphart interprets India’s federal polity, along with special provisions for religious minorities, “as signs of cultural autonomy, but these remain highly contentious issues, as minorities have-despite constitutional guarantees-remained vulnerable to a variety of threats, including violence.”

**Recognition, Status and Role of the Anglo-Indians**

While discussing with the Anglo-Indians during the fieldwork it was found that most of them felt apathetic and alienated on account of
their meagre number. Many of them would not mind dissolving their identity for a better status in society. Some of them told how could they claim equality in such a vast society? It would not be out of place to mention Johan Galtung’s theorization that “unequal access to resources or to political power are forms of structural violence,”21 aptly applies to the condition of the Anglo-Indians. The Anglo-Indians perceive that their number has never inspired any party or politician even to care for their votes. They feel as if they are abandoned on account of their inconsequential voting strength. In fact, some felt their identity was hardly any worthwhile identity. Some maintained that the Anglo-Indian community was not only ignored by the power politicians, political parties etc. but also by the Christian community itself, in matters relating to the affairs of the church, matrimonial alliances etc.

The Anglo-Indians perceive that they have not only been ignored by the other major communities but also by the Christian community to which they belong. An Anglo-Indian teacher at Chandigarh said, “the majority community of Hindus or for that matter others like Sikhs do not associate with us and treat us differently. They come and collect contributions for festivals like Dusshera, Holi etc. but never invite us to participate in the celebrations nor do they ever wish on the occasions of Christmas and Easter.” Similarly, an Anglo-Indian woman of Mohali stated “I always invite the neighbors (Hindus and Sikhs) for birthday parties of my daughter but she has hardly been invited at the time of birthday parties of their children”’ Likewise a retired Anglo-Indian clerk

said: “the Christians consider us as different and do not give us much importance as members of the larger Christian group.” Similarly, an Anglo-Indian mechanic at Delhi stated: “The Christians call us half-breeds and residue left behind by the British, it is hurtful, but what can I do?” Likewise an Anglo-Indian housewife of Delhi maintained “We feel isolated among Christians too, as they do not give us much respect and worth.” A member of the governing body of the Chandigarh branch of ‘The All-India Anglo-Indian Association’ said, “We are discriminated within the Christian community because of our British legacy.” The Anglo-Indians feel marginalised within the Christian community. In fact, Christians, because of their lineage, treat the Anglo-Indians as a different group if not others. If one of the Christians perceived Anglo-Indians as “different people.” another, a Punjabi Christian businessman in Chandigarh stated “Angrez athon chale gaye, peeche aulaad chhad gaye.” (The British have left their progeny behind). To probe this issue further, some Christians were asked if they would consider matrimonial alliances with the Anglo-Indian community. Most of them replied in the negative.

Neither the Christians give them equal status nor the other major groups recognise them as an identity of any substance. As a result, they feel isolated and suffer from a complex of existence, without any recognition. In fact, every community would like to be known in the situation it is located. Hegel in the ‘The Phenomenology of the Spirit’ has rightly argued that the need for recognition is distinctive of the human species. Recognition is the process where one gets others to validate one’s distinctiveness. In doing so, others demonstrate the efficacy of their
identity. One’s sense of identity becomes secure if others recognize it. This means a satisfactory identity can only be created if the members of a subordinate group can get the dominant group to recognize and accept them. In more recent times ‘the theory of mutual recognition’ as advocated by scholars like Axel Honneth\(^\text{22}\) and Charles Taylor\(^\text{23}\) helps us to realize that the normative self-image of individuals depends on being continually backed by others, the experience of disrespect carries with it dangers of injury like a loss of moral self-respect and a loss of ability to relate as legally equal interactional partners with all fellow human beings. Cultural deprivation and denial of recognition leads directly and inexorably to devaluation of identity and self-regard. According to Raz, “Slighting my culture, denying its value, hurts me and offends my dignity.”\(^\text{24}\) This apathy constantly haunts the Anglo-Indians in a significant manner.

Culture and cultural affiliations are constitutive of individual identity and self-worth. But, ‘when communities are referred to as ‘others’ their self-image and self-worth suffer and lead to impairment and marginalisation. These communities are often excluded and discriminated against in the public arena. A particularly pernicious form of suffering by cultural marginalisation and its baneful effects are frequently visible in our country in the form of violence both physical and structural based on community considerations.\(^\text{25}\) The marginalisation of Anglo-Indians


among others has also led them to incline towards the majority (Hindu) than preserving their distinctive cultural identity. Though they are Christians, many of them have preferred to marry into Hindu families. Since the Anglo-Indians are residing in areas surrounded by Hindus and not by Christians, they are getting closer to Hindus. They are also aware of the problems that the Christian community is facing in contemporary times. John Dayal, secretary of the ‘All India Catholic Council’, has listed attacks on Christians in various states namely ‘Orissa (40 incidents), Gujarat (60 recorded incidents), Tamil Nadu (54 incidents), Kerala (49 incidents), Uttar Pradesh (33 incidents) and Andhra Pradesh (19 incidents)’. Most Anglo-Indians preferred to be members of the dominant majority of the region i.e. Hindus and Sikhs, as it would accord them a better recognition and status. Moreover, the Christians in India also bear the stigma of being perceived as ‘outsiders’ or ‘others’. In this light, D.E. Smith points out:

“Like the Muslims the Christians in India bear a stigma imprinted by history. It is the foreign origin of both Islam and Christianity, their past association with foreign rulers which lead some to doubt the Indian ness of those who profess these faiths. The representation of a community as an ‘outsider’ or ‘anti-national’ serves to exclude and discriminate it in the public arena.”

The impact that these developments have made on the Anglo-Indians are manifested in various ways like reluctance to disclose their identity, marrying into other communities and reconciling to a situation of non-entity without any space in public life. Keeping the above factors in 

mind, an attempt was made to ascertain and analyse the views of Anglo-Indians residing in Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula, Shimla, Solan, Dehradun, Mussoorie and Delhi. The respondents were asked questions about their identity, its preservation, and better status for the community and the nature of alienation of its members. The questions were: ‘What do they think about the prospects of their small community in a vast country like India?’ ‘Do community considerations matter in public life in India?’ ‘Do they count in the towns or wards they belong to?’ ‘Does lack of economic clout hamper the position of Anglo-Indians in these towns?’ ‘Does their small number affect their political participation and consciousness?’ ‘Do they get support of powerful people if required?’ In addition, they were asked to react to statements like- (a) “Politicians don’t listen to Anglo-Indians as the latter hardly command any vote-bank.” (b) “Should Anglo-Indians be given reservation in jobs and educational institutions as they were economically backward and small in number?” In addition, they were asked how could they attain both recognition and better prospects in life? Moreover, an attempt was made to know whether the political leaders or their supporters visit them during elections and ask for their support. Similarly, a question was asked whether they were members of any political party? The study thus includes the perceptions of 278 Anglo-Indians. Precisely, 80 persons from Chandigarh, 10 from Mohali, 5 from Panchkula, 6 from Ambala, 104 from Dehradun, 8 from Mussoorie, 4 Anglo-Indians from Shimla and Solan and 60 from Delhi.

In reply to the question relating to the Anglo-Indian identity, not even a single respondent felt that it was an identity that enabled any worthwhile status to its members in the realm of socio-economic and
political life. Regarding this, an Anglo-Indian teacher said: “We are undoubtedly Anglo-Indians, but, ours is hardly any identity to talk about.” Similarly, a male Anglo-Indian college student from Panchkula remarked: “It is a disadvantage to call ourselves Anglo-Indians as it belittles us as soon as we disclose our identity.” “Juxtaposed with huge communities, Anglo-Indians would never be able to make their presence felt,” stated an Anglo-Indian housewife in Delhi. A teacher in Chandigarh even remarked, “By being Anglo-Indian, we are not going to get anything”. Similarly, an Anglo-Indian student from Delhi commented “What identity? We are nobody”. The President of the Chandigarh branch of ‘The All-India Anglo-Indian Association’ stated, “We are a defined identity in the Constitution and enjoy political representation in the form of nominations, but, the community on the whole does not feel special about being Anglo-Indian. In fact, they suffer from an inferiority complex.” Likewise a member of the governing body of the All-India Anglo-Indian Association in Delhi maintained, “The community perceives itself as a dejected identity in the socio-economic and political spheres of the country.” An Anglo-Indian female graduate student of Dehradun said, “I see no advantage being an Anglo-Indian. I prefer to call myself Christian.” Likewise a teacher from Ambala stated, “Being Anglo-Indians gains nothing. I would rather be called just Indian.”

It was observed that no respondent felt positive about their Anglo-Indian identity. Some, on the other hand, while finding fault within the community stated that the Anglo-Indians hardly made efforts and fight for community interests. For example, an Anglo-Indian teacher of Shimla remarked, “The Anglo-Indian community is like a rudderless ship, no
direction and no one putting shoulder to the wheel.” During the course of discussions it was found that the Anglo-Indians, otherwise educated and articulate, have never thought of identifying their allies in society to put pressure on the system for safeguarding the community’s interests. During the fieldwork, some Anglo-Indians also agreed with the view that they never thought of looking for allies that would broaden their group and acquire some sort of recognition as a viable entity. Even a small group can prove effective and improve the lot of the community by articulating and mobilizing its constituents towards attaining their goals, prosperity, recognition and adequate space in public life. The Anglo-Indians work all day long and return in the evening. Working for the mobilization of the group requires time and effort, which they cannot spare. Likewise, a teacher of New Delhi said, “Anglo-Indians live in mental Ghettos.” They seem to be having a mental framework which being in the same status and environs does not affect them much, as stated by an Anglo-Indian clerk in Delhi, “Not interested in community matters, we are working and getting by.” The Anglo-Indians do not want to go begging for favours, as it may not necessarily bring them returns. Power, privileges and representativeness of a group become decisive factors to construct its identity and status in society but structural inequalities affect the freedom to participate as equals in all social institutions.

The above discussions make it evident that the Anglo-Indians of the selected towns feel alienated and deprived for which they curse their identity itself, on account of its numerical insignificance. It was a situation of distress and deprivation that manifested in their behaviour. In the absence of recognition by the other communities, the Anglo-Indians
have reconciled with their way of life, secluded, as it appeared to be, with no complaints. In the absence of better recognition and adequate space, the respondents were asked what would they like to do to improve the present state of affairs of Anglo-Indians. 76 percent (211 persons) of the Anglo-Indian respondents were of the opinion that since their identity would never give them recognition and equality in the socio-economic and political life, there was no potential in preserving it. It means, the majority Hindu community attracts them more than retaining their present identity. Many thought that joining the majority can mitigate the present seclusion of the community. Of the 211 respondents (76 per cent) who desired to assimilate with the dominant community, 123 were females and 87 were males. It was only a small fraction of 14 percent (39 persons) that showed interest in retaining their identity and to work hard for its betterment. 10 percent (28 persons) of the Anglo-Indian respondents in the towns of our study perceived that they would be better off economically by migrating to European and other western countries. This can further be seen from the following table:
Table 16
Suggestions of the Anglo-Indian Respondents to attain recognition and better prospects in life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chandigarh and Mohali</th>
<th>Panchkula and Ambala</th>
<th>Shimla and Solan</th>
<th>Dehradun and Mussoorie</th>
<th>New Delhi</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrate to a foreign land</td>
<td>9 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>- (0%)</td>
<td>11 (10%)</td>
<td>7 (12.5%)</td>
<td>28 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilate with the dominant community</td>
<td>69 (76.3%)</td>
<td>8 (73%)</td>
<td>4 (75%)</td>
<td>85 (76%)</td>
<td>45 (74.5%)</td>
<td>211 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work hard and retain identity</td>
<td>12 (13.7%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>16 (14%)</td>
<td>8 (13%)</td>
<td>39 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>90 (100%)</td>
<td>11 (100%)</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>112 (100%)</td>
<td>60 (100%)</td>
<td>278 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While suggesting that “The majority community gets the lion’s share by the sheer strength of numbers”, 76 percent of the total Anglo-Indian respondents wished to merge with the major community. Similarly, an Anglo-Indian student from Chandigarh remarked, “When we are not going to gain anything from being Anglo-Indian, why cling on to this identity.” The attraction of Anglo-Indians towards the majority community has already been witnessed in various ways including matrimonial alliances. Surprisingly enough, the Anglo-Indian boys are not so much preferred by Hindu families because of their meager economy and communitarian considerations. Whereas in the case of Anglo-Indian girls, some prosperous Hindu and Sikh families have preferred them, owing to their being articulate and English speaking. Informally, the respondents were asked, “How do you feel that the Anglo-Indian girls are
being assimilated into the majority community?” Some parents felt by marriage into the Hindu families, the economy of their daughters has completely changed and the stigma of minority washed away.

Since the numerical insignificance and economic backwardness of the Anglo-Indians has proved ineffective for the community to attain recognition, prosperity and adequate space in public life, the respondents were asked, “do you feel reservation in jobs and educational institutions should be accorded to you?” In response all the Anglo-Indian respondents agreed that reservation as accorded to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes would provide not only economic and social uplifting to the community but it would also serve as an incentive to preserve and protect their identity. A teacher of Solan even remarked “Substantial benefits have come to the Scheduled Castes from reservation in jobs and educational institutions. It has given them a significant presence and security.” Similarly, an Anglo-Indian female college student from Delhi commented “The Anglo-Indians are not only numerically miniscule but also an economically meagre community in dire need of protective guarantee like reservation in jobs and educational institutions.” Likewise, a housewife in Chandigarh stated, “Job reservation in government services would redress grievances of our marginal community.” Some Anglo-Indian activists asserted that constitutional guarantees under Article 331, where the President of India may nominate not more than two members of the Anglo-Indian community to the Lok Sabha, and similarly under Article 333 the Governor of a State can nominate one member of the community to the
Legislative Assembly of the state is not adequate enough to protect their vulnerable community.

Equality, which is a constitutive principle of liberalism, demands an equal right to participate in the decision-making process of society. The principle of procedural fairness not only extends equal respect but also provides everyone with a chance to affect the outcome because everyone has been given an equal right to affect the outcome. But in practice, it does not enable equality to all in a substantive manner. Given the existence of uneven capabilities among social groups, such as the Anglo-Indians, a simple application of the principle of equality could lead to inequality of outcome. The statements from the respondents such as “we do not count”, “nobody cares for us” and “we do not matter,” enunciate complete apathy towards the ideal of equality. The Anglo-Indian community finds itself too small to assert for equality. Their small number inhibits them from staking a claim to equality vis-à-vis other minority communities. In democracy, number matters. However, when democracy is reduced to counting of heads, it may lead to problems in a plural society. According to some:

“Members of the minority groups can be outvoted on issues critical to the survival of their communities, a threat that members of majority cultures do not face since they usually control the state machinery and can use it directly or indirectly to reflect their own interests.”

Likewise, scholars like, Mill, De Tocqueville and Madison also expressed concern about the dangers posed by majority rule. According to

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them, democracy could be undercut by the majority acting in concert against minorities.

Political participation and Consciousness among the Anglo-Indians

Political participation is the involvement of all the people at various levels of the political process, including expressing ones views and raising ones voice on issues of public importance, taking interest in elections, voting etc. It generates a sense of commitment to society at large. Lesser Milbrath gives an exhaustive list of indicators of political participation like, “holding public or party office, being a candidate for office, soliciting political funds, attending meetings of the party, becoming an active member of the party, attending political campaigns, attending political rallies, making monetary contribution to the parties, contacting public officials/political leaders, attempting to talk another into voting in a certain way, initiating political discussion, voting, and exposing oneself to political stimuli.” Myron Weiner, in brief, defines political participation as “any voluntary action, organised or un-organised intended to influence the choice of public policies, the administration of public affairs or the choice of political leaders at any level of government, local or national.”

Similarly, Sydney Verba maintains that “political participation constitute acts being intended to influence the behaviour of those who have decision-making power.” However, in the case of the Anglo-Indians, it was surprising to find that an overwhelming number 62 percent (172 persons) of the respondents did not even exercise their Franchise, leave

aside matters like participation in rallies, working for candidates, contributing to party funds etc. Only 38 percent (106) Anglo-Indians voted in the Parliamentary elections of 2004. Out of them, 63 were males and 43 females. This shows that out of a total of 163 male respondents only 39 percent voted and the rest did not. Similarly, in the case of the 115 female respondents 37 percent voted. Comparatively, the percentage of male voters was higher than the females. This may further be seen from the following table:

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chandigarh and Mohali</th>
<th>Panchkula and Ambala</th>
<th>Shimla and Solan</th>
<th>Dehradun and Mussoorie</th>
<th>New Delhi</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>34 (37.5%)</td>
<td>4 (36.37%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>44 (39%)</td>
<td>23 (38.5%)</td>
<td>106 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>56 (62.5%)</td>
<td>7 (63.63%)</td>
<td>4 (80%)</td>
<td>68 (61%)</td>
<td>37 (61.5%)</td>
<td>172 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>90 (100%)</td>
<td>11 (100%)</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>112 (100%)</td>
<td>60 (100%)</td>
<td>278 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table is revealing of the fact that 62 percent (172 persons) of the Anglo-Indian community in the selected towns i.e. Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula, Ambala, Shimla, Solan, Dehradun, Mussoorie and New Delhi abstained from voting. Such a large number of non-voting itself reveals about the nature of alienation and apathy of a
community which is urban besides enjoying a higher rate of literacy than their counterparts. During interviews some respondents stated, “Our vote makes no difference.” Some others commented: “When we are not going to get anything, why vote?” Similarly, an Anglo-Indian bank employee in Chandigarh remarked: “Our vote has no effect on things run in the country.” Likewise, an Anglo-Indian telephone attendant in Chandigarh said: “We are of no consequence to politicians and political parties.” These statements show that the community has become apathetic towards politics and political life.

Further, the 172 respondents who did not vote, when asked to give reasons for not casting their vote, answered ‘not interested’, ‘name not in voters list’, ‘not well’, ‘out of town’. Their apathy towards participation in the political processes of the country can be seen from the following table:

### Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Anglo-Indian Respondents not exercising their Franchise</th>
<th>Chandigarh and Mohali</th>
<th>Panchkula and Ambala</th>
<th>Shimla and Solan</th>
<th>Dehradun and Mussoorie</th>
<th>New Delhi</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>31 (55%)</td>
<td>5 (68%)</td>
<td>3 (70%)</td>
<td>33 (48%)</td>
<td>27 (72%)</td>
<td>99 (57.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name not in voters list</td>
<td>17 (30%)</td>
<td>1 (16%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>31 (46%)</td>
<td>7 (18%)</td>
<td>56 (32.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not well</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (16%)</td>
<td>1 (30%)</td>
<td>1 (1.5%)</td>
<td>2 (5.3%)</td>
<td>7 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in Town</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comments</td>
<td>3 (7%)</td>
<td>-0 (0%)</td>
<td>-0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1.5%)</td>
<td>1 (4.7%)</td>
<td>5 (3.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56 (100%)</td>
<td>7 (100%)</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td>68 (100%)</td>
<td>37 (100%)</td>
<td>172 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘Have no interest’ was the common reply of the Anglo-Indian members for not exercising their franchise as 57.5 percent (99 persons) of them said so. In addition, 4 percent (7) of the Anglo-Indian respondents were unable to exercise their vote due to illness and 2.6 percent (4 persons) did not vote for not being present in the town at the time of elections. Furthermore, 3.4 percent (5) of the Anglo-Indian respondents did not reply to the question. 32.5 percent (56 persons) could not avail of the opportunity, as their names were not in the voters list.

While distributing the respondents according to sex, it was found that out of the 117 who represented the ‘not interested category’, 57 were males and 60 were females. Similarly, out of the 33 whose names were not found in the voting list, 16 were males and 17 females. Likewise, out of the 8 who were not well, 9 who did not reply and 5 out of town, the gender wise proportion was 3,2,4, males and 5,7,1, females respectively. In addition, it was also observed that in the recent assembly elections in 2007, in Punjab and Uttrakhand, the Anglo-Indians had hardly exercised their franchise. In Dehradun 21 Anglo-Indians voted during the assembly elections. However, there was no voting turnout of the community in the municipal elections of Shimla and Panchkula in 2007.

Keeping the above issue in mind, the Anglo-Indian respondents from Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula, Ambala, Shimla, Solan, Dehradun, Mussoorie and Delhi were asked, “whether the candidate or their party members visit them during elections?” All the respondents from these towns answered in the negative. Furthermore, the respondents were asked, “are you members of any political party?” Only four Anglo-Indians from
these towns were members of political parties. Three belonged to the Congress and one to Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). In terms of gender, all four were males.

The above discussion makes it evident that the Anglo-Indians are a miniscule group and being small and scattered fails to attract attention of contesting political parties and candidates during the polls. This may not be true about other minorities which have vote-banks are also concentrated in certain states, regions or pockets or areas. In a multi-ethnic society like India equality is hardly attainable in the realms of public life, leave aside decision-making. Consequently, ethnic groups existing simultaneously have different degrees of power. For instance, the Madrasis in Maharashtra, the Bengalis in Assam and the Muslims are ‘vote-banks’ and all political parties have resorted to mobilise these groups for electoral support. The Sikhs though constitute only 1.94 percent of the total population of the country, are concentrated in Punjab besides enjoyed economic and political power. Similarly, the Parsees, even smaller than the Anglo-Indians command presence in public life on account of their economic clout. However, the Anglo-Indian community has no such attributes to command status and influence in society. They do not perceive that they are treated equal at value par with other groups, though they enjoy citizenship rights like others. There exists a sense of apathy and disillusionment among them. Regarding the condition of micro groups, Bhiku Parikh has rightly observed:

“The feeling of being citizens and yet outsiders is difficult to analyse, but it can be deep and seriously damage the quality of a micro groups citizenship and
their commitment to the political community. Although such groups are free in principle to participate in the collective life of society, they often stay away or ghettoize themselves for fear of rejection and ridicule or out of a deep sense of alienation.32

The nomination of Anglo-Indians to the law-making bodies at the national and state level is a privilege but they think it is not sufficient. It does not ensure them equality vis-à-vis other communities and sustenance in a democratic set-up. Their dismay has also led their behaviour that they either dissolve their identity and join Hinduism and other bigger identities or migrate to countries like Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.