Conclusion and Suggestions

The present study has examined and analyzed the socio-economic, political and ethnic characteristics of the Anglo-Indian community, a miniscule minority in the diverse Indian society comprising a myriad of socio-cultural identities. It has been found that in an age of competitive community assertions and devolution of powers, the Anglo-Indians, instead of actively participating in public life, suffer from apathy and alienation, having hardly any role and space in the realms of political life. As a matter of fact, they perceive themselves as excluded in all spheres of public activities and decision-making. The study has thus probed into matters pertaining to the socio-economic profile of the community, background of leadership, nature of community organizations, level of political participation, perception about their own community and its prospects in a vast country like India. Moreover, the study has investigated issues of pluralism and democracy in the context of a micro community of Anglo-Indians and the problems faced by them.

The study is empirical and, in terms of canvas, it covers the Anglo-Indians in the Union Territory (U.T.) of Chandigarh, Mohali (Punjab), Ambala and Panchkula (Haryana), Dehradun and Mussoorie (Uttrakhand), Shimla and Solan (Himachal Pradesh) and Delhi. It was only in these towns of the north-western part of the country that the Anglo-Indian families reside. In all, the study has covered 278 Anglo-Indian families selecting one person per family for detailed interview. Out of the 278 families, 80 were from Chandigarh, 10 from Mohali, 5 from
Panchkula, 6 from Ambala, 104 from Dehradun, 8 from Mussoorie, 5 from Shimla and Solan and 60 from Delhi. In addition, the study covers the socio-economic profile of all the nominated Anglo-Indian members to the Lok Sabha from 1952 onwards, including the present one constituted in May 2004. Likewise, the study includes all the Anglo-Indian members nominated to the two consecutive state assemblies of 11 states namely, Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. It is only in these 11 states that the Anglo-Indian community enjoys the privilege of representation through the members belonging to their own community nominated to the state assemblies. This apart, an attempt has been made to analyze the functions, composition and importance of the Anglo-Indian associations, particularly the ‘All-India Anglo-Indian Association’ founded in 1876.

In terms of origin, The Anglo-Indian community came into existence in 1687. The community instead of having any smooth sailing has faced ups and downs right from its inception. However, during the British rule, the Anglo-Indians were by and large considered as a privileged group and enjoyed preferential treatment over others in terms of recruitment in certain departments like the Railways, Auxiliary Forces, Customs, Post and Telegraphs services. With the transfer of power in 1947, the Anglo-Indians had some apprehensions regarding their future prospects of the community as a result of which many of them decided to migrate to the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. It obviously led to a considerable reduction of their population in the country. According to the Census records their numbers reduced from
3,00,152 in 1941 to 1,11,687 in 1951. However, those who stayed back received full support of the new government formed after Independence. As a matter of fact, the Anglo-Indians were accorded generous Constitutional benefits securing representation in the law making bodies at the Centre as well as the state level. In addition, they were also granted educational grants and quota in certain government sectors like the Railways, Customs, Posts and Telegraph which were however, discontinued after 10 years in 1960, resulting in further migration of some Anglo-Indians mostly to countries like Australia and Canada. The second time migration of Anglo-Indian families further depleted the group in terms of numerical strength. The old towns covered under the present study were also affected by such migration. However, in the case of Chandigarh, the Anglo-Indians either migrated to the city in search of jobs, particularly in the new missionary schools, or came on transfers from the various government departments like Air-force, Army and Postal services. Gradually, they chose to settle in the ‘City Beautiful’ that offered them better economic and educational facilities. Similarly, the new townships like Panchkula and Mohali have attracted the Anglo-Indians because of employment opportunities in new schools, call-centers etc. Whereas, their number has declined in the old towns and cities like Shimla, Ambala, Solan, Dehradun and Mussoorie, where they had an appreciable presence in the pre-Independence period.

With regard to their background, the study has revealed that in terms of education the Anglo-Indians are relatively better educated. As a matter of fact, it is perhaps the single community in the country that has 100 percent literacy, a large number being in the category of graduates.
and post graduates. However, the community has a very close ratio of male and female. This may be attributed to factors like better education, urban background and their dependence on jobs as the main source of livelihood. The close gender ratio among the Anglo-Indians also indicates that they are not strictly guided by the norms of 'patrilineal inheritance.' This among others has also saved the Anglo-Indian community from vices like foeticide. Furthermore, the Anglo-Indians unlike other social categories in India do not hold the stratification of caste. A mention may be made here that even most of the Christian groups like the Syrians, East Indians and Indian Christians also adhere and follow the system of caste endogamy in matrimonial alliances.

In terms of their economic background, the study finds that economically the Anglo-Indian families are less fortunate as most of them fall in the category of lower income group. As a matter of fact, a large number of them earn their livelihood as school teachers in private schools and the rest of them work as clerks, telephone operators, receptionists etc in hotels, call centres and other business enterprises. Most of the Anglo-Indians were drawing salaries less than Rs. 10,000/- per month. Factually speaking, out of the 278 respondents, only 14 were drawing a salary between Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 20,000/- per month. Since a large number of Anglo-Indians fall in the lower income group it has caused alienation among them in various ways. With meager salaries they can hardly afford to have their own houses or send their wards to professional courses. Surprisingly, out of 278 respondents, only 15 owned houses whereas, the rest of the respondents and their families lived in the rented accommodation. Moreover, since their meagre salaries fulfill merely their
day to day sustentant needs and household requirements, they cannot afford to send their wards for extra coaching or tuitions necessary in order to qualify and gain entry into professional courses. Hence, their College and University education confines to the Arts and Social Science subjects. The present study did not find even a single case among the wards of the Anglo-Indian families attending courses in medicine, management, engineering etc. In fact, after completion of graduation most of them take up teaching in schools. It is during the course of teaching that many of them simultaneously pursue their studies for B.Ed., M.A. and diploma courses through correspondence to become eligible to teach higher classes.

Since their salaries are insufficient to meet the household requirements, most Anglo-Indians engage themselves in part-time activities for additional income and thus left with no time to participate and promote the activities of associations and organizations representing the community. During the fieldwork it was also observed that most of them find no relevance of these associations because nothing tangible has been done by the existing ones in terms of jobs, housing, education and other welfare activities. The problem is that the associations of Anglo-Indian do not matter in the corridors of power on account of being organizations of a small and marginal community. In fact, the powerful politicians and bureaucrats never bother about the demands of the Anglo-Indian associations. Above all, since the Anglo-Indian elites have been using such associations for purposes of enhancing their own political ends, it has encouraged factionalism within resulting in the emergence of numerous splinter groups or associations headed by the influentials in
different parts of the country. The regional variations have also promoted factionalism and multiplication of associations working at cross purposes. For example, the Anglo-Indians in south have their own associations independent of ‘The All-India Anglo-Indian Association’ (AIAIA), whereas, in the north India the Anglo-Indians are by and large associated with the AIAIA. Such divisions have further weakened the position of an already miniscule community in the country.

Nevertheless, the community has a privilege of nomination of their representatives to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies in as many as eleven states of the Indian Union. However, during the fieldwork it was found that most of the Anglo-Indians were not so satisfied with this privilege as it has benefited only a small group of political elites who once nominated retain their seats for as long as possible. It appears to be true as Mr. Frank Anthony had secured nomination for as many as eight times to the Lok Sabha. Similarly, Mr. A.E.T. Barrow was nominated seven times and Mrs. Beatrix D’Souza for the two consecutive terms of the Lok Sabha.

However, unlike the elected representatives of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, the nominated members do not enjoy power and influence due to which they fail to bring any benefits to the Anglo-Indian community. In fact, they are ignored by the powerful politicians or ministers at the state and central levels. It was mainly on account of this that the nominated Anglo-Indian members failed to influence the central government in 1960 when it decided to discontinue the reservation of jobs and educational grants to the Anglo-Indians. Moreover, since then the
Anglo-Indian leaders have been pressing the government to revive the matter regarding the facility of reservation in services and also provide the ‘Backward Class’ status to the community to elevate its socio-economic condition. In addition, in 2007, a ‘National Forum of Anglo-Indians’ consisting of the Anglo-Indian Association of Southern India, the Anglo-Indian Guild at Bangalore, nominated Anglo-Indian members of the State Assembly from Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh and one of the present nominated Anglo-Indian members of the Lok Sabha was formed to protect the socio-economic and educational interests of the community. The members of the ‘Forum’ also met the Minister of Minority Affairs in February 2007. Though the minister sympathized with them, but any concrete steps have yet to be taken towards the redressal of grievances of the Anglo-Indian community. Mention may be made here that, unlike other minority communities in the country, the central or state governments have never constituted any committee or commission to look into the socio-economic hardships faced by the Anglo-Indians in India. Being a small group does not mean that it remains excluded from the socio-economic and political life of the country. Due to their numerical insignificance the Anglo-Indians even find themselves devoid of benefits available to other prominent minorities having a sizeable vote-bank of their own. Most of the respondents in the study were also of the view that democracy was a game of numbers. Their little presence without any electoral worth has proved a disadvantage for the community. Many Anglo-Indians conscious of their numerical drawback, even hesitate in approaching powerful politicians for their personal and community problems. For them, democracy hardly allows equal space and recognition
to minor groups like the Anglo-Indians as the major groups get the lion’s share by sheer strength of numbers.

It is only in theory that “all who are affected by a decision should participate in making that decision, to exclude the losing groups from participation in decision-making clearly violates the primary meaning of democracy.”¹ The Anglo-Indians, on account of being a micro group of inconsequential voting strength, have even refrained from asserting for their rights or adopting the path of agitation to safeguard their interests. “The exclusion of the minorities from governance is not desirable in a multicultural polity because it perpetuates inequality and injustice.”² The fieldwork for the study suggests that the Anglo-Indians never actively participate in the political process. In fact, their growing alienation from the public life has also affected their right to exercise their Franchise. No doubt, democracy in India has deepened with the participation of large number of weaker sections and downtrodden in the recent years. But this does not hold good in the case of Anglo-Indians, who despite being better educated and secular minded, have remained apathetic and alienated from political activities. For example, out of the 278 respondents as many as 172 did not vote in the last Parliamentary elections, held in May 2004. They replied that they had no urge to go to the polling booth to exercise their franchise. During interviews some respondents stated, “When we are not going to get anything, why vote.” In fact most of the respondents perceived that their community has no value in the politics of the country. They said “Our vote makes no difference.” The ideology that people

¹ www.wikipedia.com
choose representatives who are answerable to them seem somewhat meaningless in the case of Anglo-Indians. The situation of ‘no-worth’ has formed their psyche and it can be said that the involvement of participation of Anglo-Indians in public life is abysmally low or non-existent. According to Pateman:

“Democracy fosters development, enhances a sense of political efficacy, reduces a sense of estrangement and contributes to the formation of an active and knowledgeable citizenry capable of taking a more acute interest in governmental affairs.”

However, in the case of Anglo-Indians such factors seem somewhat unrealistic. If a large number of this minority community fall in the category of ‘non-voters’, it becomes evident that the democratic system is not receptive to such small groups. When micro communities carry a feeling of estrangement and perceive that they do not matter in society and polity it raises questions about the success of our entire democratic set-up. Regarding this, David Held maintains “If people are marginalized, they are likely to believe that only rarely will their views and preferences be taken seriously, weighted equally with those of others.” It has been rightly observed:

“If democracy is not receptive to various identities in a plural society then it remains a majoritarian democracy that ‘disprivileges’ the minorities, a steam rolling system in which it is valid to override the minorities if, numerically, they are insignificant and politically and economically, powerless.”

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‘Majoritarianism disadvantages minorities, alienates them and limits self understanding.’\textsuperscript{6} Most theorists of multiculturalism maintain that democracies have a majoritarian bias and it has become an assimilated ingredient in the metabolism of modern democracies. The possibility of multicultural agenda being used to defend strong communitarian structures is an important concern for all democracies. According Alam, “Majority in a democracy is always a contingent factor, which is a permanent feature of social life.”\textsuperscript{7} The dangers of majoritarianism are widely accepted and in our country it forms a complex amalgam. India has been described as a liberal democracy with a communitarian ethos. “When people become conscious of their numerical strength, they begin to feel more able to influence things in their own favour.”\textsuperscript{8} Neera Chandoke rightly observes, “In India, it is majoritarianism that despite all the precautions built into the Constitution, and despite the original spirit of the polity threatens to overwhelm us.” \textsuperscript{9}

On account of being a small community, the Anglo-Indians feel that they do not get recognition in society. The marginalization of Anglo-Indians has also led them to incline towards the major sects (Hindu and Sikhs) of the region than preserving their distinctive cultural identity. Though they are Christians, many of them, regarding their matrimonial alliances, have preferred to marry into Hindu and Sikh families. Informally, the respondents were asked, ‘how do you feel that the Anglo-Indian girls are being assimilated into the majority community?’ Some

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid. P. 22.
parents felt that by marrying them to the families belonging to dominant communities, the economy and status of their daughters has completely changed and has washed away the stigma of being from a minority community. In other words, they have themselves given in to the process of assimilation as their separate existence has failed to accord them recognition and respect. However, it is their existent situation which has forced them to follow the path of assimilation. "Misrecognition or absence of recognition of one’s identity can be an instrument of self-depreciation. Besides being a stigma, it is a potent instrument of one’s oppression."  

The Anglo-Indian community does not find any relevance maintaining their identity as it has neither brought them any incentives (job reservations and educational grants) nor social recognition and status.

In a multicultural society "The constituent communities receive both just recognition and a just share of economic and political power."  

In other words, the political community in a plural society values and reflects its diversity in its policies, structure and conduct of public affairs. The multicultural society develops a common sense of belonging among its citizens.  

Commitment or belonging is reciprocal in nature. Regarding this, some eminent scholars are of the view that:

"Citizens cannot be committed to their political community unless it is also committed to them and they cannot belong to it unless it accepts them as belonging to it. The political community cannot therefore expect its members to develop a sense of belonging to it unless it equally values and

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cherishes them in all their diversity. Although equal citizenship is essential to foster a common sense of belonging, it is not enough. Citizenship is about status and rights, belonging is about being accepted and feeling welcome. Some groups might enjoy the same rights as the rest but feel isolated. Although such individuals are free in principle to participate in collective life, they often stay away for fear of rejection or out of a deep sense of alienation.”

Moreover, the small and scattered group of Anglo-Indians is on the verge of extinction from the social map of India. This is not a positive sign in a democracy. In fact, in a political society recognition and awareness that some minorities are disadvantaged should structure the concern for preserving the vulnerable sections of society. Such small groups are needed to be treated somewhat differently. A multicultural polity values diversity and aims to devise a system of special rights by which this diversity can grow and flourish. Regarding this, Neera Chandoke is of the view that, “If some sections of society require the enactment of special measures because they are below the threshold of economic and cultural well-being, government will need to institute remedial measures like job reservations and income redistributing schemes to compensate them.” In November 2006, the ‘Sachar Committee’ had also recommended “The idea of providing certain incentives to a diversity index be explored to ensure equal opportunities in employment, housing and governance.” In fact, such procedures adopted by the state would amount to ‘substantive equality’- an important

presupposition of equality in democracy. In the case of Anglo-Indians, they had earlier enjoyed job reservation in certain government departments till 1960. However, they feel the facility was snatched away from them because of their numerical insignificance. It is suggested that the Anglo-Indians be covered under the policies that channelize and govern the other vulnerable sections of the Indian society for their economic development.

Housing is one of the basic requirements for human survival. For a citizen, owning a house provides significant economic security and status in society. In fact, possessing a house brings about a profound social change in his existence, endowing him with an identity, thus integrating him with his immediate social milieu. Since the Anglo-Indians are by and large a houseless group, it would be desirable if they were granted houses under special schemes patterned on the line of schemes like the ‘Indira Awas Yojana’. Mention may be made here that the objective of ‘Indira Awas Yojana’ is primarily to help construction of dwelling units for members of Scheduled Castes/ Schedule Tribes, freed bonded laborers and also non- Scheduled Castes /Scheduled Tribes and rural poor below the poverty line by providing them with grant-in-aid.17

Housing schemes if promulgated especially for the Anglo-Indians would instill confidence in them who otherwise feel they are far from the mainstream public life. The public sector banks should also be advised to include home loans for the Anglo-Indians under the differential rate of interest (DRI) scheme, which may be about four percent simple interest. It

17 www.zpratchur.kar.nic.in

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has been observed that ‘the banks have shied away from loaning to the poor people’. In the case of Anglo-Indians, they do not approach the banks for loans because they find it difficult to pay the installments. In most cases their meagre salary certificate hardly suffices for the purpose. If a differential treatment is accorded to the Anglo-Indians in view of their economic backwardness, it would encourage them to apply for loans and enable them to possess houses.

In addition, “Seeking financial assistance from the state is perhaps, the most common claim of minorities to overcome the disadvantages faced by them.” In fact, substantive equality generates the understanding that vulnerable minorities have to be protected through the grant of supportive measures. Keeping in view the financial condition of the Anglo-Indians, it is suggested that monetary support and reservations in educational institutions be granted to their wards, to pursue professional courses in medicine, engineering, management etc. It is rightly observed that “Society is better off when all of its constituents have equal access to opportunity.” However, in the given set-up, the Anglo-Indians suffer from disadvantages on account of economic backwardness, lack of social recognition, numerical insignificance and states indifference. These factors have made them apathetic towards politics and political life. Bhiku Parikh has rightly pointed out:

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“No Multicultural society can be stable and vibrant unless it ensures that its constituent communities receive both just recognition and a just share of economic power.”

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