Chapter 2

Origin and History of the Anglo-Indian Community

The origin of the Anglo-Indians goes back many centuries to the earliest years of contact between Europe and India. Historically, the community dates back nearly 400 years to the time when Vasco de Gama, the intrepid Portuguese navigator, landed at Calicut on the (West) Malabar Coast of India in May 1498. The Portuguese activities in India were unchallenged, thus enabling them to establish trading posts along the western sea-coast of India. ‘By 1510, Goa was captured and before the end of the 16th Century, the Portuguese had acquired either through military conquests or through treaties with native rulers, vast territories and soon many factories sprang up along the western shores of India from Calicut to Diu.’

In the beginning, the Portuguese government “in its concern for the morals of its employees in the East, used to send batches of women to India. However, the sending of women-folk being very costly could not be continued for long and so the Portuguese government encouraged marriages of their men with native girls.” However, within a short span, in 1500, there was at Diu a Portuguese Governor-Alfonso d’Albuquerque and as a means of establishing Portuguese authority in India he

encouraged his countrymen to marry Indian women. “Albuquerque’s intentions were obviously those of a colonizer and a missionary to settle permanently in India and hence he encouraged his soldiers to marry native women baptised as Christians.” He, however, gave permission to marry, only to men of approved character. Further, “The women they married were the daughters of principal men of the land.” The offspring of these mixed marriages between the Portuguese and Indians were known as ‘Luso-Indians.’ The Luso-Indians were employed in the Portuguese established factories and armouries. Moreover, when the Portuguese, under pressure from the British, abandoned their Indian possessions, “The Luso-Indians rapidly sank in the social scale and within a short period of time a majority of them reverted to Indian stocks, and are today known as Goanese, a community residing in Goa, Bombay and the West Coast of India. This apart, in the larger cities of India like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, the Luso-Indians had retained their European characteristics and many of them ultimately amalgamated with the newly-born mixed community of British descent, the Anglo-Indians.”

The birth of the Anglo-Indian community, a sequel to the Luso-Indian community, dates back to the later half of the 1600s. It was in the year 1600, when Queen Elizabeth I granted a Charter to the East India Company to initiate trading operations in India. At first the English merely visited Indian ports as traders. The success of the East India

Company's ventures could be seen by the rapid rise of factories. For example, by 1612 a factory was established at Surat and by 1639 another factory was established at Madras. In 1698, the East India Company extended its base in Bengal. It purchased the Zamindari of three villages—Sutanati, Calcutta and Govindpur. In fact, the British soon acquired certain territorial privileges and permission from the native rulers to erect fortifications for their protection. Moreover, with the growth of trade, it became imperative for the British to construct fortifications and employ soldiers to defend the factories against the attacks of the Marathas and also from the marauders of those days. As the factories grew, so did the English population within their walls. “Thus there gradually grew up colonies of Englishmen only in all trading factories along the shores of India for the East India Company had prohibited British women from accompanying their men folk to India. These English factories provided no accommodation for women and there were very few instances when the factors were allowed to take their wives to India. In fact, the Directors wrote to the representatives in India stating: The soldiers wives shall come to their husbands if they can find means to satisfy or pay the owners for their passages.”  

It was inevitable that under these rigid regulations, the British men, cut off from the society of women of their own race, would sooner or later form alliances with native women as other European traders had done before them. “Resultingly, many of them formed alliances (legitimate or otherwise) with Luso-Indian and other Indian women.”

Needless to say, these alliances did not meet with the approval of the Protestant authorities in England and “letters were often written by them to the ‘Court of Directors’ accusing them of secretly undermining the established Church by their tacit consent to such marriages and further demanding prohibition of such practices. The Company’s officials in India, however, saw the impossibility of enforcing such an order and recommended to the Directors that mixed marriages be allowed in order to prevent immorality. More important, the British were not slow to recognise the advantages to be derived from a ‘mixed-community’.”

Subsequently, on 8th April 1687, the ‘Court of Directors’ of the East India Company addressed its President at Madras stating:

“The marriage of our soldiers to the native women of Fort St. George is a matter of such consequence to posterity that we shall be content to encourage it with some expense, and have been thinking for the future to appoint a pagoda (coin) of Rs.5/to be paid to the mother of any child that shall hereafter be born of any such future marriage. This small encouragement will increase the number of such marriages.”

---

The order of the ‘Court of Directors’ of the East India Company marked the implementation of a new and deliberate policy whereby intermarriages between British men and Indian women were encouraged and a biologically hybrid community was brought into existence. As mentioned, in its application to the community, the designation ‘Anglo-Indian’ is of fairly recent origin; ‘the community has traversed several names such as “mixed blood”, “Indo-Briton” and “Eurasian”’\(^\text{13}\). However, it was only in 1911 that Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy, sanctioned the use of the term “Anglo-Indian” to describe the community in the census drawn up that year. It may be mentioned here according to the census of 1911, the population of the Anglo-Indian community was 101657.\(^\text{14}\) However, since then, the community had experienced several ups and downs during the course of its development. An attempt has been made here to study the socio-economic and political fortunes of the Anglo-Indians in four different phases. These phases explain the status of the community from 1600 A.D. onwards.

**The First Phase (1600 – 1785)**

The initial period between 1600 and 1785 was comparatively better in terms of prosperity and recognition of the community as a distinct group by the British. As a result of the Order of 1687 of the East India Company, a considerable number of mixed marriages took place between British men and Indian women. According to some, “As the British factories multiplied in number, larger and larger forces were required to


\(^{14}\) Census of India -1911. ‘Table 9-Distribution of Christians by Race and Denomination’. 
protect them and the circumjacent territories. The greater the number of soldiers imported, the larger did the ‘mixed community’ grow by marriages with girls of Indian parentage.”  

The products of mixed parentage, the Anglo-Indians, became important wheels and pivots in the machinery of the Company’s operation. During this early period many of them received education and training that qualified them for employment in the Company’s service. The Directors of the East India Company perceived that:

“… if a Christian education were bestowed upon them, their manners, habits and affections would be English, their services would be of value in the capacity of soldiers, sailors and servants and a considerable benefit would accrue to the British interests in India, resulting finally to the advantage of the British kingdom intending to give stability to the settlement.”

According to Goodrich, “This suggests that the East India Company was interested in building up a permanent staff of civil and military officials, indigenous to the soil of India but at the same time identified with British interests.” Thus, the Anglo-Indians proved invaluable as intermediary subordinates in the factories and trading stations, having the advantage of speaking the vernacular language and also knowing the customs and traditions of the native people. A considerable number of Anglo-Indians were also employed in the non-commissioned ranks of the Company’s armies. According to Stark:

---

“Their swarthy skins, their faultless knowledge of Indian tongues, modes of dress, habits and religious practices enabled them to take on a perfect disguise; to penetrate into many a camp and return with important intelligence regarding the enemy’s strength, position and plans. Nor was their usefulness restricted to any one part of the country. Born of Indian mothers wherever the Company had struck its roots, they had in part the external characteristics of the Indian races from which their mothers had been derived.”18

Incidentally, the Anglo-Indian children born of military officers in the East India Company enjoyed better facilities than those serving in the factories and trading stations. The reason being “If their fathers could afford it, they were sent to England for their education and had generally returned to India in the Covenanted and Commissioned services of the Company.”19 Such was the cases of John Beaumont, a wealthy Company official of the Tellicherry trading station in the Bombay Presidency20 and William John Palmer who was the military secretary to Warren Hastings and who also founded the banking house of Palmer and Co. at Hyderabad in 1814.21 Some other well known Anglo-Indian progeny of this period were James Kyd, the master shipbuilder to the Company and Major General Hugh Massy Wheeler, commandant of the British forces in Kanpur during the critical times in 1857.22

However, “not all were as fortunate for many sons and daughters of officers were not able to go to England for education, “As their skins were

---

too dark to escape detection.”23 Nevertheless, they were sent to private or mission schools where they received good education. The first school for Anglo-Indians was established at Fort St. George in Madras in 1645. In addition, schools like St. Mary’s Church Charity School, Madras, in 1715 and the Upper Orphanage School at Calcutta in 1782 were specifically established for the Anglo-Indian children with the aim of making them fit for the public services. However, the products of these schools were not treated on equal terms with the fortunate Anglo-Indians who were educated in England. Hence in an age of colour prejudice many Anglo-Indians despite their upbringing and good education were able to obtain employment only in subordinate posts such as clerks etc. in the Company’s service.

Nonetheless, on the whole, the community was still privileged as most of the Anglo-Indians were absorbed in the service of the Company. The Anglo-Indian community was a beneficiary of the Company’s rule during this period and according to some “They prospered and increased in numbers so rapidly that it was not long before they outnumbered the English population in India.”24 This inter alia alarmed the Englishmen who started giving a new thought to the entire development, resulting in some restrictions and inconvenient decisions by the authorities affecting the Anglo-Indian community in an obvious manner as discussed in the second phase.

The Second Phase (1786 – 1857)

During this phase the Directors of the East India Company on account of the growing number of Anglo-Indians passed a series of orders that adversely affected the Anglo-Indian community in various ways. These orders not only prohibited Anglo-Indians from seeking employment with the Company but also restricted their activities in other spheres of life as well.\textsuperscript{25} The first order of 14 March 1786 prohibited the Anglo-Indian wards of British Military officers from proceeding to England to complete their education. As a result, a majority of the Anglo-Indians were unable to complete their education, which used to help them in procuring covenanted services in the Company. Moreover, the second Order passed in April 1791 stated that “No person, the son of a native Indian, henceforth be appointed by the court in employment in the Civil and Military forces of the Company.”\textsuperscript{26} The fact that a large number of Anglo-Indians were employed in various branches of the Company’s services might have been observed as a threat to the Englishman.\textsuperscript{27} Another resolution in 1795 further reduced the status of the Anglo-Indians serving in the British army. The order stipulated that “All persons not descended from European parents on both sides were disqualified for service in the army except as fifers, drummers, bandsmen and farriers.”\textsuperscript{28} These restrictions relegated the Anglo-Indian community, which earlier used to hold many lucrative posts and other benefits.

\textsuperscript{25} Evelyn Abel, \textit{The Anglo-Indian Community}, New Delhi, Chanakya Publications, 1988, P. 15
\textsuperscript{26} George Forrest, \textit{Selections from the State Papers of the Governor General of India} Vol 2, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1926, P. 162-163
\textsuperscript{27} Evelyn Abel, Op.cit. P.16
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, P. 17
Obviously, it is important to examine the reasons for this change of attitude towards the Anglo-Indians who up till then had obtained steady employment in the service of the Company. The causes that motivated the British to take such decisions, have been explained by scholars and commentators in various ways. Some scholars believe that the Englishmen passed these orders because of the fact that they panicked by the revolt in Haiti by the Mulatto (mixed European and Negroid blood) in 1791. It so happened that the Mulatto population combined with the natives had driven out their white masters and set up a Mulatto and Negro Republic. The British decision makers thought that the Anglo-Indians might emulate the story of Haiti and threaten their existence in India in connivance with the natives. Incidentally, at that time many Anglo-Indians held high civil and military positions in the service of the Company that had made them wealthy and influential in India. “The East India Company perceived that the Anglo-Indians could pose a threat to its future political security.”\footnote{Cedric Dover, ‘Half-castes’, London, Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd., 1937, P. 91, Also see Coralie Younger, Op.cit., P.12;} Moreover, the growing friction between the Directors of the Company in England and their administrators in India regarding appointments in the service of the Company was also an important reason for the suppression of the Anglo-Indian community. It may be mentioned here, that until ‘The Act of Parliament’ passed in 1772, the Company was absolutely independent in its affairs in India, but the Act made considerable changes in the Constitution of the East India Company and imposed a series of administrative and economic reforms and by doing so, clearly established the British Parliament’s sovereignty and ultimate control of the Company. Hence, the increasing pressure of
influential members of Parliament and shareholders of the East India Company demanded appointments for their protégés in the Company’s services, which were regarded as greatly lucrative. According to Mathur:

“Nepotism was rampant and more often than not sons and relatives of influential members of Parliament were landing from England and had to be appointed to a higher post on the basis of the orders he brought, to the utter dismay of the Company’s servants already working in India.”

In the words of O’Malley, “These repressive orders were passed to create job openings for the benefactors of the Company by getting rid of the Anglo-Indians and Indians.” Evelyn Abel was of the view that:

“Lord Cornwallis, the first Governor –General under the new Act of 1772, had been sent to India to do a thorough house-cleaning of the Company. Together with his team of administrators he set up a rigid bureaucracy and a civil service monopolized by the Englishmen who unlike their predecessors believed that everything eastern was corrupt. The presence of the Anglo-Indian was to them an example of this corruption and hence the repressive orders were passed against them.”

Statements as above are an illustration of not only negative feelings of the British towards Anglo-Indians but also show that the community had been type-cast and isolated as a group. In fact these new measures, according to some scholars, had reduced the Anglo-Indians to the status of a proscribed downtrodden race. The impact of these laws obviously led

---

to widespread unemployment among the Anglo-Indians, who had till then enjoyed a privileged position in the services of the East India Company. It was not that only their new entry was banned, but the Anglo-Indians in every branch of the Army were also discharged without any compunction as to their future. Resultantly, the Anglo-Indian community had no profession to turn to on account of being essentially trained for Company services. Thus “Within a short span of ten years, the community was deprived not only of every honourable career but of the very means of livelihood.”34

Nonetheless, the ray of hope and career avenues for the Anglo-Indians were channelised by the most powerful Indian princes namely the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Maharaja of Alwar, the Sultan of Mysore and the Maratha chiefs Madhoji Scindia and Holkar, who eagerly sought and employed Anglo-Indians to lead, train and discipline their armies. Some Anglo-Indians like Hyder Hearsey and Lt. Col. James Skinner had raised their own cavalry and infantry that rose to fame due to their skill and feats.35

However, the East Indian Company had hardly cast the Anglo-Indians out of its Army, when it found itself beset with foes. The impending war with the Marathas and the collusion of Tipu Sultan with Napoleon caused the British to fear a French invasion and so in 1798, the Company realised the services of the Anglo-Indians were necessary to safeguard its interests. Consequently, in the same year a proclamation was

---

issued “Ordering, under threat of dire penalties, all Anglo-Indians back to join the Company’s armies.” Despite the repressive orders and other injustices perpetrated against the Anglo-Indians by the British, the former responded recklessly to the latter’s call for assistance. Many Anglo-Indians left the Indian princes and joined the British Army. Stark writes, “The Anglo-Indians heard the call of the blood and obeyed it with alacrity.” In fact, a number of Anglo-Indians who had loyally served under Holkar were executed when he entered the war against the British in 1802. However, to the dismay of the community, as soon as the Mysore and Maratha wars ended in 1808, the Commander-in-Chief of the Company’s forces issued an order discharging all Anglo-Indians from the British regiments in India. This act of repression towards the community was influenced by the report of Viscount Valentia, who had been commissioned by the East India Company to visit its possessions between the period of 1802 and 1806. Valentia in his report had stated:

“The most rapidly accumulating evil of Bengal is the increase of half-caste children. They are forming the first step to colonization, by creating a link of union between the English and the natives. In every country where the intermediate caste has been permitted to rise, it has ultimately tended to the ruin of that country. Spanish America and St. Domingo are examples of this fact. Their increase in India is beyond calculation and it may be justly apprehended that they hereafter may become too powerful for control. With numbers in their favour, with a

---

relationship to the natives and their natural indolence and pusillanimity they need to be dreaded.”40

The Order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Company’s forces in 1808 gave a severe jolt to the Anglo-Indian community. In fact, it proved devastating as the entire community was thrown out of jobs with hardly any strong reasons, just on the basis of misconceived notions. Some maintain that “It seemed to have been the policy of England to take advantage of the loyalty of Anglo-Indians whenever they felt the need for it and again to cast them away as soon as the need was over.”41 Moreover, in 1813, the Company issued a regulation whereby Anglo-Indians were not permitted to purchase or hold land nor live further than ten miles from a Company settlement. Hence they could not turn to agriculture or trade.

However, according to some, “The Anglo-Indians rejected by the British, in turn looked down on the Indian with a scorn because they perceived that it was their Indian blood that was their curse.”42 Their feeling of hatred was reciprocated by the Indians (Hindus and Muslims), who had a horror for miscegenation and an even greater suspicion of the half-castes.43 Moreover, earlier when the Anglo-Indians were welcomed by the Indian princes to join their armies and administration they created problems as most of the Anglo-Indians left the princes and returned to the Company on receiving a call from the latter. Thus, the Anglo-Indians who were debarred from the Company’s army and wished to take up arms with the native rulers were not trusted. As observed:

“The progress of communal adversity was thereby greatly accelerated for those who had answered the ‘call of the blood’ not only found their blood relations deaf to the pathos of their soul-stricken appeals, but also found the native states distinctly inhospitable to hirelings whose paternal allegiances were so easily stirred.”

Thenceforth, the Anglo-Indian community was treated as an ostracized class and stood isolated as a group.

On the one hand, as seen above, this period led to unemployment and economic debasement of the community coupled with political and social suppression and on the other hand, this period also produced some of the brightest facets of Anglo-Indian history as economic discrimination was brightened by the increasing efforts at self-help within the community. During the first half of the 19th century (1800-1850) the Anglo-Indians were convinced that they must themselves find a practical way to the betterment of their economic condition.

**Community Consciousness among the Anglo-Indians**

Years of political and economic depression and social suppression made it imperative for the Anglo-Indians to consider other avenues of life. Being shut out from the education that was required for various callings in civil life the need for higher education was felt by the community. In response, ‘The Parental Academic Institution’ was established in 1823 at Calcutta, with the aim of giving education that would be fit for departments of Public services. Similarly, other important institutions in

---

44 ibid. P.139
Calcutta came into being like the Sherbourne’s School and Dhurrumtollah Academy of Drummond. A mention may be made here that most of these schools also received students from other Indian communities. For example, Dwarkanath Tagore and Raja Romnath Tagore were pupils of Sherbourne School.\footnote{Herbert Stark, Op.Cit., P.68.} The Anglo-Indians were convinced that they must themselves find a practical solution for the betterment of their economic condition. Accordingly, “In 1827 ‘The Calcutta Apprenticing Society’ was formed by the community with the objective of “paying premium for lads apprenticed to mechanical firms.”\footnote{Ibid., P.100.} This society also attempted to start a ‘Marine School’ in 1828 by purchasing an old vessel named ‘Princess Charlotte of Wales’ from the East India Company. However, “Due to paucity of funds, the plan floundered and had to be abandoned.”\footnote{Hector Daniell, op. cit., P.65.} In 1828 John Ricketts established ‘The Commercial and Patriotic Association’ to engage in the wide field of agriculture, trade and general commerce.\footnote{Herbert Stark, Op.Cit., P.100.} Unfortunately due to the lack of experience and scarcity of funds and donations these new ventures could not help the community as was expected of them.

However, despite improved educational facilities the prospects of the Anglo-Indian community during the first half of the nineteenth century were none too promising. Clearly the time has come for Anglo-Indians to rally together and take some other course of unified action in order to redress their grievance.

\footnote{Herbert Stark, Op.Cit., P.68.} \footnote{Ibid., P.100.} \footnote{Hector Daniell, op. cit., P.65.} \footnote{Herbert Stark, Op.Cit., P.100.}
The political, social and economic predicament of the community was freely discussed in every Anglo-Indian home. The necessity of fostering a community consciousness and *esprit de corps* within the framework of a social organisation was realized. In this regard, one such organisation was founded in 1825 at Calcutta by a group of prominent Anglo-Indians called the ‘East Indian Club’. Within five years of its existence the ‘East Indian Club’ summed up enough of courage to draw up a petition of grievances of the Anglo-Indians to be presented directly before the British Parliament. The deputation was headed by John Ricketts and the petition was placed before both Houses of the British Parliament in 1830. The petition was of outmost significance because it contained the core of all the disabilities and grievances suffered by the Anglo-Indian community throughout their history under the British rule. It is important therefore, to examine some of the grievances and see to what extent the first attempt of organized protest by the Anglo-Indians was effective.

One of the main reasons responsible for so many disabilities of the Anglo-Indian was his anomalous legal status. As Ricketts pointed out the Anglo-Indians were “Sometimes recognised as Europeans and sometimes as natives, as it serves the purpose of the government.”

The above stated categorization of the Anglo-Indians led to a second problem, namely, the application of the Civil Law with regard to the Anglo-Indian. It may be mentioned here that at that time three kinds of Civil law were in operation in the Courts. The Hindus came under ‘Hindu

---

Law’, Muslims under ‘Mohammedan Law’ and British under the ‘English Civil Law’. As far as the Anglo-Indian was concerned he was considered a British subject only if he resided in Calcutta, but if he lived outside Calcutta he had no recourse to the English Civil Law. In fact, Anglo-Indians all over the country did not receive the protection of any Civil Law in important matters of daily life. The situation of the Anglo-Indians was described thus:

“However extraordinary the fact may appear, there is no law which regulates their marriages and makes them lawful-there is no law which shows the rule that is to define the legitimacy or illegitimacy of their issue-there is no law which points out whether they possess the right of bequeathing by will and if so to what extent…there is no law that declares which of their children or whether one or all shall succeed in case of intestacy…”

The third grievance of the Anglo-Indians was that they were excluded from all covenanted offices of the Civil and Military services and from all sworn offices in the Marine service of the East India Company. What particularly rankled the Anglo-Indian community was the fact that no Anglo-Indian could hold a covenanted post in the Civil Service because he was not European but neither could he qualify for a civil position reserved for the natives of the country. Thus Anglo-Indians were:

“Ineligible to most of those subordinate employments in the Judicial, Revenue, police departments and even in the

51 Ibid., P24.
military service which were however open to the Hindu and Mohammedan natives of the country.”

In this regard, Ricketts petition was examined at length by the ‘Select Committee’ of the ‘House of Lords’ on 31st March 1830 and simultaneously by the ‘House of Commons’ on 21st June 1830. However, due to sudden political upheavals in England at that time, the petition did not produce the results which were expected of it. Though Ricketts petition was given a hearing in both Houses of Parliament. His mission was somewhat ill-timed because there was widespread distress all over England caused by decline in commerce and agriculture. In fact, popular uprisings were breaking out among the impoverished English peasants and labouring classes. Moreover, in the midst of all this general discord, George IV, King of England died, so it was understandable that Parliament would not give the petition priority over England’s own domestic problems. However, this was a conscious effort among the Anglo-Indians to organize themselves with the object of achieving solidarity and a more articulate voice in matters concerning their welfare.

Nonetheless, the appeal of the Anglo-Indians made the British conscious of their responsibility towards the community. “The British were aware that they were responsible for the origin of the Anglo-Indians and that the members of the community looked up to them for help and guidance.” In 1833, the ‘Charter’ of the East India Company was renewed. Though, the Charter did not make any substantial difference as far as the legal status of the Anglo-Indians was concerned as they were

---

53 Herbert Stark, ‘Hostages in India’, Op.cit, P.113
still denied the protection of any Civil Law in important matters of daily life. However, according to Section 87 of the Act, appointments to all posts were open to people of any race in India. The new Charter provided that religion, birthplace, descent or colour should not be a bar to employment. Moreover, since the higher posts continued to be filled by recruitment in England, only subordinate posts were bestowed upon Indians and Anglo-Indians. Initially, the Anglo-Indians had an ascendancy over the Indians in appointments to various posts as English supplanted Persian as the official language of the Courts and government offices. Comparatively very few Indians were acquainted with English at that time. However, Indians rapidly learned and mastered the English language and the monopoly of Anglo-Indians in the services ceased. The Anglo-Indians had to make way for their counterparts in many posts, which they had formerly dominated. From this point started a continuous competition between the Anglo-Indians and Indians for appointment in the subordinate grades of the public services.

New Avenues of Employment for the Anglo-Indians

With the introduction of new services in the area of communication like the Railways and Telegraph in 1851, the Anglo-Indians found ample opportunities of employment in these new sectors. At that time the population of the Anglo-Indians was 75000. These new areas in fact, gave the Anglo-Indians the maximum opportunities because their Indian counterparts were reluctant to join these departments. The Indians regarded the railways and other means of transport like steamship

53 Evelyn Abel, Op.cit, P. 32
navigation as a direct threat to their caste and religion.\textsuperscript{56} Moreover, the Anglo-Indians were relatively better educated than their Indian counterparts and to some extent the fact of racial considerations also played a role in employment to the disadvantage of the natives. However, manual labour was recruited from the poorer section of the Indian labour class, the more ambitious Indian was busy availing himself of higher education hence, the Anglo-Indians were given large-scale employment in these departments, and the community found no competitors in this field. It was particularly in the subordinate grades of these departments that Anglo-Indians were given large scale employment. According to Herbert Stark:

\begin{quote}
“Anglo-Indians therefore found no competitors. From them were recruited telegraph operators, artisans and electricians. They supplied the railways with station staff, engine drivers, inspectors and guards. The expansion of the postal system threw open another avenue of employment to them.”\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the above-mentioned departments became a virtual monopoly of the Anglo-Indians much to the dislike of their Indian counterparts. This apart, the Anglo-Indians appeared to have a marked aptitude for mechanical and technical work. A mention may be made that despite a large number of Anglo-Indians employed in the Public Services, the general economic condition of the community was poor. Mary Lee summed up the situation facing the Anglo-Indian community thus:

“As a class they have much cause for complaint. While employed in Government service they have, been kept wholly in subordinate positions. They are debarred from military services, they are subjected to some kind of social contempt- not very formidable. Educated as they have been and hedged about by adverse influences it is not strange that comparatively very few of them have achieved distinction.”

In 1857, the ‘First War of Independence’ broke out. It was a period in which Anglo-Indians proved allies of the British and did not join the revolt against the Company. As a result, “they, along with the British personnel also faced violence at the hands of those who had revolted against the Company.” There were a number of incidents in which Anglo-Indians faced violence from the Indians. For example, in Lucknow, pupils of the La Martiniere School; mostly Anglo-Indians, were enlisted to defend the city against the mutineers. Likewise in Kanpur the Anglo-Indians and British were massacred by the forces of Nana Sahib. Similarly, the Daryagunj area of Delhi, which was largely inhabited by Anglo-Indians was thoroughly searched and every Christian was put to the sword. Keeping in view their role during the critical times in 1857, the British authorities accommodated the Anglo-Indians in various sectors. The community that faced the wrath of the Company rulers during the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century had restored the faith of the British and that obviously benefited them in various ways, including preferential treatment in employment.

60 www.wikipedia.org
**The Third Phase (1858-1919)**

The third phase was relatively better in terms of employment and related facilities accrued to the community on account of its services to the authorities. Lord Canning and Lytton, the then Viceroy's of India were particularly sympathetic and concerned about the conditions of the Anglo-Indian community. In 1860, Lord Canning, Viceroy of India, publicly acclaimed the industriousness of the Anglo-Indian community and acknowledged the claim the Anglo-Indians had upon the British government. He recommended they be nurtured so they would become an asset rather than a liability. Consequently, the Anglo-Indians were given preferential treatment in recruitment in the railways, posts and telegraphs and customs. However, their entry was restricted only to subordinate positions. According to Coralie Younger, “They did not have the best of jobs. At least the subordinate positions lulled them into acquiescence.” The government opened employment opportunities to the community to secure the Company’s interests as the British were aware that they could count on the community’s support in crucial times.

However, lots of Anglo-Indians still remained unemployed, as a result of which the economic condition of many Anglo-Indians remained backward. The community influentials explained their condition to the British authorities. As a result, the sympathetic Viceroy, Lord Lytton, in 1879 established the ‘Statutory Civil Service’ (Uncovenanted Civil Service) that was a ‘native branch’ of the civil service. This was a part of

---

61 Herbert Stark, op.cit, P.130. Also see Coralie Younger, Op.cit, P.15
Lytton’s policy to increase the avenues of employment for the Anglo-Indian community. Subsequently, this service gave great relief to the Anglo-Indian population. According to the report of the ‘Public Service Commission’ the Civil Service had a large concentration of Anglo-Indians.63

However, the preferential treatment accorded to Anglo-Indians led to their complete dependence on government employment and created a false sense of security within the community making them content with subordinate positions with no inclination to develop and enter other sectors like business, trade, professions etc. Nor were they involved in public life or for that matter, politics since government employees were not allowed to participate in political activities or join political organizations. Apart from this, they remained isolated from their counterparts in the country because of their identification with the British authorities.

Towards the close of the 19th century, there was an increasing demand for government employment by the educated Indians, as a result of which the government introduced a series of reforms with a view to placating the Indians by giving them a greater share of government employment. Subsequently, there was a change of governmental policy with regard to Anglo-Indians being included under the term ‘natives of India’. In a resolution dated 11 November 1882, the government stated that the term ‘natives’ were to apply to persons of ‘pure Asiatic origin.’

---

This meant that positions in the subordinate grade formerly held by the Anglo-Indians would now be closed to them. The Anglo-Indians were beginning to feel the pressure of competition with other Indians in areas of employment and so, it became imperative for them to take concerted measures to protect their economic future. Regarding this, the Anglo-Indians felt the need to have their own association to bring the members of the community together for a unified action in order to redress their grievances.

The Rise and Growth of Anglo-Indian Associations

The developments that had taken place in India in the last few decades of the nineteenth century resulting in a change in the British attitude towards the Anglo-Indians had made it conspicuous for the community as a whole to make sustained efforts to rally together and make their grievances heard in one voice. In fact, never before was there a greater need felt for unified action by the Anglo-Indians as their economic and social position was in jeopardy by the government policy of yielding slowly but surely to the demands of other Indians.\(^\text{64}\) Till now, the Anglo-Indians seemed to be content relying on efforts of individual leaders like John Ricketts to give the community the needed boost in morale. Anglo-Indian organisations and leadership was thus contingent on accomplishments of individuals whose hard work on behalf of the community usually died with them. It was only in the latter part of the 19\(^{th}\) century that organized structure within the community began to take a more permanent appearance.

One of the first organisation to make its voice heard on behalf of the Anglo-Indian community was the ‘Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association’ established in Bengal by E.W. Chambers in 1876. This association was also known as the ‘Calcutta Association’ on account of having its headquarters in Calcutta. However, the foremost concern of the association was to alleviate the community in terms of employment and education. Regarding this, the association made several representations to the government drawing its attention to the problems faced by the Anglo-Indian community, but was not successful in its endeavours in terms of achieving any benefits for the Anglo-Indians. The reason being the ‘Anglo-Indian and Domiciled Association’ lacked in membership. Not many Anglo-Indians had joined this organisation as the community was disunited among themselves. According to Abel, “Dissension within the community prevented many Anglo-Indians from joining the association.”

Nevertheless, in those changing times the association and its leaders had provided guidance to the Anglo-Indian community in Calcutta and in other parts of Bengal. It may be mentioned here that the present ‘All-India Anglo-Indian Association’ (AIAIA) is a successor of the ‘Calcutta Association’. A descriptive analysis of the AIAIA has been attempted in Chapter five of the present thesis.

However, it was not long before other Anglo-Indian associations followed in the wake of the ‘Calcutta Association’. Several Anglo-Indian associations emerged in the different states namely, the United Provinces,

---

Madras and Bombay. For example, in 1898, J.R. Wallace founded the ‘Imperial Anglo-Indian Association’. Wallace had on two occasions, i.e. in 1897 and 1902 presented the grievances of the community to the Secretary of State and members of Parliament in Britain, but his efforts did not bring any relief to the Anglo-Indian community. However, with the death of J.R. Wallace in 1903, the ‘Imperial Anglo-Indian Association’ floundered.

In 1879, ‘The Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association of Southern India’ was formed by D.S. White in Madras. D.S. White was aware of the need of strong unity among the Anglo-Indians of the country to achieve a redressal to the socio-economic problems faced by the community. In accordance, D.S. White proposed a conference of delegates belonging to the different Anglo-Indian associations to be held in Jabalpur in 1885. However, the conference was not very satisfactory as attendance was poor and the leaders of the various associations could not come to a consensus as to the mode of action to be adopted to redress the problems of the Anglo-Indian community. The ‘The Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association of Southern India’ concentrated on the social, cultural and material welfare of the community but achieved little success. However, it was not long before this association was disbanded like most other Anglo-Indian associations of that era.

The above brief sketch of Anglo-Indian associations reveals that most of the community associations kept a low profile as far as politics were concerned. Since most Anglo-Indians were employed in government

---

service the associations were afraid to show any active interest in politics. Moreover, power struggles and petty jealousies among leaders of the various Anglo-Indian associations prevented the unification of the community which otherwise could have achieved redressal of the socio-economic problems faced by them.

However, the first two decades of the twentieth century saw an upsurge in the Indian national movement and with it demands by the Indian National Congress for a greater association of Indians in the administration of their country. Under pressure, the British government introduced a series of reforms during the years 1909-1919, with a view to placating the Indians by giving them a greater share of participation in the administration. In this regard, the ‘Government of India Act of 1919’ was the turning point as it specifically promised Indians a larger share in legislation and administration as well as government employment. Subsequently, with the introduction of the 1919 reforms a university degree became compulsory for admission into services.67

The prerequisite in government services being a university degree, obviously caused a setback to the Anglo-Indians, who had been entering the public services with the qualification of Senior Cambridge. Moreover, their entry into jobs with lower qualifications had made them complacent resulting in opting for higher education only in rare cases. Consequently, under the new rules the better-educated Indians succeeded in cornering most of the jobs. The Anglo-Indians found it difficult to compete with their counter part Indians who possessed higher academic qualifications.

---

67 Coralie Younger, Op.cit, P.15
resulting in the exclusion of the community from positions they once had preferential treatment in recruitment.

Since the ‘Government of India Act of 1919’ affected the Anglo-Indians in a big way their associations made representations to the government drawing its attention to the need for employment to the community and pleaded for concessions. However, Anglo-Indians’ entry into jobs became difficult since in terms of educational qualifications no concession was given to the community. Therefore their privileged position no longer existed as employment was given on the basis of qualifications, which obviously forced them to go for higher education. The developments in this phase show that the community had made considerable progress in the arena of government employment. But the 1919 reforms came as a setback as the qualification for such jobs was revised to university degree which obviously forced the community to go for higher education to compete with their counterparts.

The Fourth Phase (1920 onwards)

Since, the privileged position of the Anglo-Indians was affected by the new conditions of employment, the community’s associations had to put pressure on the British authorities for concessions on the pretext of the community’s traditional dependence on the job sector. Consequently, the Anglo-Indians was accorded certain privileges such as educational grants, political representation and quota in the services. In 1932, the British government allotted the Anglo-Indians 12 seats in several provincial legislatures. These included four seats in Bengal, two seats in the Madras
Province, two seats in Bombay including Sind, and one each in the United Provinces, Punjab, Bihar, Orissa and the Central Provinces (including Berar) respectively.\(^{68}\) Further, the Act of 1935, granted several benefits to the community. The significant aspects of this Act as regards the Anglo-Indians were four fold. firstly, The Government of India Act of 1935 had included a definition of the Anglo-Indian community. According to Section 26 of the First Schedule of the Act of 1935, “All persons of European descent in the male line, whose parents were habitually resident in India were and are Anglo-Indians.”\(^ {69}\) Secondly, ‘the Anglo-Indians were granted representation in the Central and Provincial legislatures. The community was accorded one seat in the Central Assembly and one in the Council of States (the Upper House). In addition, the community was allotted two seats each in the Bengal, Madras and Bombay Legislative Assemblies and one seat each in the legislative assemblies of Punjab, Bihar, Orissa, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces respectively.’\(^ {70}\)

The third important feature of the Act of 1935 regarding the Anglo-Indian community was that according to Article 242, the Anglo-Indians were given 3 percent reservation in the Appraiser department of the Customs, 8 percent on the railways in posts with which the community had a past association and 4 percent in the Telegraphist cadre.\(^ {71}\) Fourthly, under Article 83,\(^ {72}\) the Anglo-Indian community received statutory

\( ^{68}\) www.columbia.edu

\( ^{69}\) Government of India Act, 1935, P.139

\( ^{70}\) www.legislativebodiesinindia.gov.in/states


\( ^{72}\) Government of India Act, 1935, Pp.34-5.
educational protection in the form of special grants. This gave the Anglo-Indians an opportunity to improve their educational qualifications.

However, with the concessions granted to the community their dependence on the British kept them away from the national movement that obviously alienated them from the people of the country. Moreover, many Anglo-Indians were members of the ‘Auxiliary Force’ and the Indian Police, both these forces were often used against the agitators for freedom, which further alienated them from the rest of the people. But, service in the Auxiliary Force was mandatory for the Anglo-Indians if they were to get employment in the railways. According to Weston, “The Anglo-Indians were compelled to join the Auxiliary Force. They could not get posts in the railways unless they agreed beforehand to join the Auxiliary Force. Though the Anglo-Indians disliked this policy of the British, they had no option and had to join the force for they depended largely on railway jobs for sustenance.” Compulsory enlistment in the Auxiliary Force was a precondition for employment of Anglo-Indians in the railways. It may be mentioned here that in 1941, the estimated number of Anglo-Indians in the Auxiliary Force was as high as 29,346. The British policy of refusing Indians entry into the Auxiliary Force but permitting Anglo-Indians to join it was yet another factor contributing to the general dislike of most Indians for the Anglo-Indians.

Nonetheless, the wind of change had set in and it was quite obvious that the concessions granted to the Anglo-Indian community by the

---

Government of India Act of 1935 would not last long. The British government beset by domestic and foreign problems was no longer willing to extend the umbrella of protection to the Anglo-Indians. This can be illustrated by the ‘Cripps Mission’ of 1942 and ‘The Cabinet Mission Plan’ of 1946, which offered no concessions to Anglo-Indians. It may be mentioned here that the significant suggestions of the Cabinet Mission of March 1946 were: (a) allotting each province a total number of seats proportion to its population, (b) to divide this provincial allocation of seats between the main communities in each province in proportion to their population and (c) to provide that the representatives allotted to each community in the province shall be elected by the members of the community in its legislative assembly.76 Thus, “The Cabinet Mission recognised only three major communities in India: general, Muslim and Sikhs. The smaller communities like Anglo-Indians would upon population basis have little or no representation since they would lose the weightage which assures them seats in the provincial legislatures.”77 Moreover, the community was also denied representation in the ‘Interim Government’ by the British. The Interim Government formed on 2nd September 1946, “Granted the Congress to nominate six members (including a Schedule Caste Hindu). The Muslim League to nominate five members. In addition, three other members (a Parsi, a Sikh and an Indian Christian) were be nominated by the Viceroy.”78 The Anglo-Indians were ignored by the British.

However, the Indian leadership adopted a sympathetic attitude towards the beleaguered community. As a result, the community was accorded political guarantees making it one of the six politically recognized minorities of India.\textsuperscript{79}

The Anglo-Indians in Independent India

With independence in 1947, the Anglo-Indian community entered the new era with increased anxiety. The partition and subsequent holocaust further created fears among the minorities. The Anglo-Indians also feared that without the British they would encounter difficulties. This resulted in the exodus of the Anglo-Indian community from India to different countries like the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. The migration of the community was motivated by various factors such as the fear of reprisals against them because of their association with the British. Their counterparts considered them to be the lackeys of the British. According to some, the Anglo-Indians feared retribution on account of being identified with the British and therefore they migrated to different countries.\textsuperscript{80} Similarly, others maintain that “Immediately after independence, because of the sense of anxiety for their safety, several thousands of Anglo-Indians migrated.”\textsuperscript{81} Likewise, according to Coralie Younger “The exodus of the Anglo-Indians was motivated by the fear of reprisals against them by the other Indian

\textsuperscript{79} Frank Anthony, Op.cit, P.i
\textsuperscript{81} Frank Anthony, Op.cit, P.382.
communities.”

During the fieldwork, the author was told by an old Anglo-Indian motor mechanic in Delhi, that:

“In 1947, when the British withdrew from India, a fear psychosis prevailed among the Anglo-Indians. We felt uprooted because we were not sure of our political status nor felt secure in living amidst the other Indian groups. Actually the British never treated us as their equals but slightly better than the other Indians. This gave us a sense of superiority—maybe a false one. But once they left, we did not know to whom we should show our loyalty. As we were identified with the conquerors, we too became suspects in the public eye. As a consequence many of our community left the country.”

Apart from the above, the Anglo-Indians also perceived that they would find better economic prospects in life outside India which obviously inspired them to avail themselves of the opportunity to migrate in large numbers in 1947. The exodus of Anglo-Indians was clearly revealed by the reduction in their numbers from 3,00,152 in 1941 to 1,11,687 (37.23 per cent) in 1951. However, if probed further, it would be found that the number of the Anglo-Indians has been constantly increasing from one census to another. For example, the decennial growth of the community was 63.74 per cent from 1901-1911, 11.24 per cent from 1911-1921, 45.90 per cent from 1921-1931 and 81.81 per cent from 1931-1941. It may be mentioned that in 1918 the influenza epidemic that broke out in many parts of the country catastrophically affected the population growth rate of the country. This obviously had an effect on

83 www.ncert.nic.in
the Anglo-Indian population in 1921 which can be further seen in the tabulation below.

**Table 1**

The Decennial growth of the Anglo-Indian population since 1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>Decennial percentage of growth rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>62085</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>101657</td>
<td>39572</td>
<td>+ 63.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>113090</td>
<td>11433</td>
<td>+11.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>165000</td>
<td>51910</td>
<td>+ 45.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>300152</td>
<td>134985</td>
<td>+ 81.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>111687</td>
<td>188465</td>
<td>- 62.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 1901-1951, Mumbai, Manas Publications.

However, an interesting aspect was that 37.23 per cent of the Anglo-Indians stayed back in the country after 1947. The exodus of their community members did not move them. It may be mentioned here that a large number of those who had migrated belonged to the relatively rich and resourceful Anglo-Indian families. Another factor that had contributed to the reduction of the Anglo-Indian population in 1951 was that many of them had registered themselves as Indian Christians.84

Anyway, those who stayed back as Anglo-Indians, received full support of the new government. In fact, they were accorded generous Constitutional guarantees. The new government under Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was quite considerate to the community. The Indian Constitution, which came into effect on 26 January 1950, accorded the community

---

84 Census of India 1951, Chapter 1-General Population, P.60
guarantees in the field of education, quota in certain government services under Article 336 and 337 and nominations to both the Lok Sabha and state assemblies under Article 331 and 333, respectively. In the words of M.V. Pylee:

“These Constitutional provisions, on the whole, show the genuine desire of the framers of the Constitution to accommodate the special interests of a small community like the Anglo-Indians and to infuse confidence in them. When the British left India in 1947, the Anglo-Indians were apprehensive of their future in free India. But soon, many members of the community found that not only were their interests safe but the leaders of independent India were prepared to give them special consideration so that they could continue as Indian citizens with hope and confidence.”85

However, to the dismay of the community, the educational grants and quota of employment in the government jobs under Article 336 and 337 were reduced gradually over a period of ten years and finally became inoperative in 1960. Further, the tirade against English started worrying the community whose mother tongue was English. Anxiety within the community was also caused by the attitude and utterances of Hindu revivalist leaders. In certain areas like Bareilly, Meerut, Jabalpur and Lucknow the Anglo-Indians were exposed to insults, which caused fear about the safety and future of the community in the country.86 It also led to some migration of Anglo-Indians in the 1960s. However, the introduction of the ‘British Immigration Act’ of 1960, which placed restrictions on all persons seeking entry into Britain, made it difficult to

migrate to the United Kingdom. But some Anglo-Indians looked to Australia and went there in the 1960s. When the Anglo-Indians immigrated to foreign lands, they did not have to modify their culture or their behaviour to any great extent, perhaps they were distinguished only by the traces of an Indian accent in their speech. Many Anglo-Indians changed or modified their accent. According to some scholars, “The Anglo-Indians have successfully made the transition from emigrants to accepted residents of the respective countries. However, there seems to be a cultural carry-over from the occupations of the community in India as most of them are in service jobs.”

 Nonetheless, the decennial growth of the Anglo-Indian population in India would show that the migration was not on a large scale but only in a limited number. The population of the community as estimated by community activists, leaders and several writers was 2,00,781 in 1961, which increased to 2,35,941 in 1971. At present, the population of the Anglo-Indian community is estimated to be 3,50,000. The growth of the Anglo-Indian population has been marginal as compared to the other communities in the country. The reasons are firstly, the Anglo-Indians being nuclear families and a service class community, usually prefer late marriages, which also affect the population of the community. They usually get married after attaining some degree of economic stability. Secondly, the women of the community are by and large working women. Since the community is dependent on the job sector, the women are also compelled by circumstances to take up jobs and other remunerative work.

for sustenance. Thirdly, the Anglo-Indians see inter-community marriages as an escape to a better life. Intermarriages seem to be the solution to the isolation of the community. They perceive that their insignificant number does not allow them any worthwhile socio-economic status and space in the realms of Indian society. This, to some extent has also compelled them to shed their identity. An Anglo-Indian teacher in Chandigarh stated: “Many Anglo-Indians not only hide their identity but have started abandoning it in the quest for better recognition and related benefits.”

In brief, the aforesaid discussion shows that the community in the past had faced ups and downs from one period to another. Sometimes it had encountered serious problems and sometimes gained privileges. At times their descent itself caused problems for the Anglo-Indians. Apart from this, their identification with the British had kept them isolated from the rest of the Indian community. This factor brought the community at the crossroads on the eve of independence and also caused an exodus of the Anglo-Indians in 1947. In a sense, this dilemma persisted till the early 1970s. However, in spite of various types of apprehensions those who had stayed back received generous benefits in the form of Constitutional guarantees, though certain privileges accorded to them lapsed in 1960, yet the political representation in the form of nominations of the Anglo-Indians in Parliament and the State Legislatures continued as before. Since their quota in jobs was discontinued, the Anglo-Indians obviously looked increasingly towards the private sector and presently, as discussed later, most of them serve in the private sector.