Chapter III

SOCIO-CULTURAL TRAITS, PATTERNS, LIFESTYLE
AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF
ANGLO-INDIANS IN KERALA

Anglo-Indians who lived in Kerala for centuries made lasting contribution to the culture and tradition of our country. They formed a new ethnicity of their own, unique in all respects. The women of Kerala who lived with Europeans gradually adapted to the western culture and the Christian faith; logically their children were as well brought up with the same culture and faith of their parents.\(^1\) The Anglo-Indian community gradually developed a distinctive way of living, projecting a blended version of both Indian and European influences and had an obvious inclination towards the latter.\(^2\) Besides British, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French contributed their part in determining this hybrid community; however, the impact of the British was more dominant compared to the others.\(^3\) Anglo-Indians adopted the religion, distinctive customs, manners, language, diet, clothing, and speech of their European progenitors.\(^4\) Over the years those Anglo-Indians in Kerala, successfully integrated into the main stream of Indian society and developed a western style of living, influenced by Indian culture.

Social Life
The Anglo-Indians were on the margin of two cultures and two races of people.\textsuperscript{5} This position held by the Anglo-Indians largely determined their social status in India. Language was an important factor that kept the Anglo-Indians distinct and remote from the Indians. Most of them were reluctant to learn local languages and Hindi.\textsuperscript{6} So the Indians regarded the English-speaking Anglo-Indians as foreigners and socially segregated them. Besides Indian customs, traditions and practices were alien to the Anglo-Indians and hence they were reluctant to mingle with Indians. At the same time, the life style and attire of the Anglo-Indian women created a kind of distaste among the Indians. The absence of a common culture, language, religion and way of life restricted them from having unified sense of a community as Anglo-Indians and desist from mingling with outsiders.\textsuperscript{7}

The conditions changed with the Indian independence. The post-independence era tells a different story. Anglo-Indian leaders advised them to be more faithful and committed to India. Frank Anthony urged them to think themselves as Indians and called for close interaction with other communities of the main stream. The introduction of western music and new forms of carnivals enabled better interaction with the local people as did the familiarity of the Anglo-Indians with the Latin rite, feasts of saints and other rituals. Wherever the Portuguese landed, as a token of their
gratitude to the Lord, a Church was erected. In Cochin itself they built sixteen churches and chapels.

The Anglo-Indian participation in the political and social activities is noteworthy. Their representation in the Legislative bodies, social leadership and active involvement in the activities of the Latin Catholic Church testifies to their socio-political involvement. The majority of the Anglo-Indians were literate. It is reported that generally the girls would go for higher levels in education while the boys choose some technical education which would help them get a job easily. This is related to the social practice in courtship where a boy has to bear the expenses of taking a girl out.

Luso-Indians were very industrious. As mechanics, smiths, carpenters and later in laying railway tracks and drawing telegraph lines during the British period they undertook a task with utmost satisfaction. The women took up the professions of tailoring, teaching, nursing and opted for religious vocation to serve as nuns in the convents in and outside the country. Luso-Indian women were excellent administrators in the offices of the commercial establishments. The Luso-Indian men with pleasing personalities attracted the attention of the British and later rulers and served as intermediaries to fill the communication gap between the British and the Indians as they were multi-lingual.
Anglo-Indians were people with excellent civic sense and they followed social etiquettes and manners with great care. Their community had no social taboos and inhibitions unlike the rigid caste system which prevailed in the Indian society. They shared water, food and other consumable items with the members of other communities. They also shared churches and cemeteries with the members of the Roman Catholic Church. They enthusiastically participated in church ceremonies, rituals and festivals with others. There was a variety of recreation and entertainment in their life. Watching movies, playing music and dancing provided recreation for them. The Anglo-Indians had a special taste and innate talent for music. Even in an average Anglo-Indian family one could find a piano. Some of the Anglo-Indians were pop singers and they popularized pop music in India.

**Customs and Traditions**

The Anglo-Indian community in Kerala developed as a unique group with distinguishing features derived from the cultural traditions of Europe. Both discarded by and rebuffing their Indian heritage, Anglo-Indians followed a way of life similar to that of the overseas British citizens. They gave up the aspects of Indian culture which lacked a Western orientation. Over decades, this picking and choosing of identity references has had a major impact on their position in society both within and outside India.
Through centuries, until the Indian independence, the British served as their reference group.\textsuperscript{10}

Although Anglo-Indians received English cultural patterns as their own, they never reached a safe terrain of social equality.\textsuperscript{11} At the same time they were never really an integral part of the cultural or social sonata of indigenous India. Manners and mannerisms of the Anglo Indians, especially women caused much censure from the native people. Esther Mary Lyons rightly narrates it as: “they did not consider the ballroom dancing and going to club till late at night was good and respectable for women. Besides they did not think the club where liquor was served was meant for a decent and respectable Indian woman. Most Indians considered the Anglo-Indian and European women cheap just because they went to the club, drank with men and did ballroom dancing in public with different men while the Indian women were very conservative and kept indoors, had arranged marriages, the Anglo Indian women lived a more liberated western style life and had the same freedom and equality in the community as did the British women”.\textsuperscript{12}

The Anglo-Indian customs, their cuisine, attire, language and ceremonies were different from that of the local community. Though they embraced the Catholic faith their lifestyle was strikingly different from the Catholic traditions of the Kerala Church. Ceremonies and festivals were part
of Anglo Indian life. Marriages, baptisms, birthdays, house warmings, Christmas, New Year’s Eve, and other such occasions were celebrated with great pomp and pleasure. Often the celebrations were beyond their financial capacity but they kept it up as merrymaking and luxurious life were integral to their character.13

The Anglo-Indians of Kerala, over the years of mixing and mingling have been assimilated into the main stream of Kerala society. However, they tried to maintain the purity of their unique culture. This ethnic community emerged out of mixed marriages between European men and Indian women but at present they seldom promote mixed marriages. People outside the Anglo-Indian community also have some reservation to marrying from the community. However there are instances of inter marriages in recent times. Such dilutions have affected the retention of their exclusiveness.14

One of the greatest contributions of the Portuguese was the introduction of mixed marriages. In a caste ridden society where the marriages and mingling were restricted to certain classes and castes, the Europeans shattered the caste structure. With the official permission on the part of the Portuguese and subsequently other European powers, they began to marry Indian women. The Portuguese took spouses from different communities in Kerala. They married Thiyya women in Malabar. After
marriage these women naturally embraced Christianity. Mixed marriages in Kerala by that time became very common, and there are reports that in 1600CE, hundred such marriages were held in Kodungalloor;\textsuperscript{15} the majority of such marriages were from the Thiyya community.\textsuperscript{16}

The oppressed population in the lower strata of the caste system began to enjoy unusual freedom and change in the social status with the marriages. Thus the mixed marriages brought about a silent but fundamental revolution in the social structure of the society. The set of people who were forbidden the freedom and dignity were elevated to a different social stratum with these marriages.\textsuperscript{17} This has special significance to the women at the grass root level especially those who were branded as untouchables and marginalized the \textit{vaisyas} and the \textit{sudras}. The new social status, freedom from untouchability and the manifold stigmas of caste system encouraged many to follow the suit.\textsuperscript{18} It was followed even later during the Dutch and the English rule. The prolonged period of British rule, their authority and vibrant presence in the Kerala community, made great impact in the customs manners and rituals of the people. The marriage ceremony also underwent great change during this time, an evolution akin to the European style.
The Anglo-Indian family relationship was officially brought into existence as a result of the policy of the East India Company. In 1978 the company directors decided to present a *pagola* to the mother of the Anglo-Indian child. These ‘pagola marriages’ were by no means confined to middle class or lower class Indian women.\(^{19}\) The British secured their wives mainly in two ways, either by treaties with Indian princes or chieftains or by marriage to widows or camp followers. Usually the women were baptized and the marriage was performed according to Christian rites. This period was known as the ‘Brahminising’ of English rule, when it was felt that these marriages or alliances with the local people would attract the sympathy and support of the Indian population.\(^{20}\)

Normally Anglo-Indians are endogamous, but seeking spouses outside the community is also not uncommon. During the earlier period not only the community but colour also mattered in their choices in marriage. The white prefer white and the black opt for the same complexion. But later on the colour preferences and other restrictions in the selection of marriage gradually faded. Normally the age of marriage is in between 25-30. The Anglo-Indian marriage has a specific system. The betrothal or engagement takes place in the house of the girl and as a symbol of betrothal the boy slips the engagement ring on the girl’s finger. The date and venue of
The marriage takes place in the parish officiated by the priest. The wedding is attended by close friends and immediate relatives of the bride and the groom. The Anglo-Indian bride conventionally wears a white gown in the western style and the groom wears a suit. The full skirted gown is usually made with around seven meters of exotic material. With the intermingling and affiliations with other Christian denominations and families, brides wearing white or cream saris are also seen. The bride’s head is covered with a white decorated veil and a tiara or a bunch of flowers and she holds a bouquet in her hand. The Anglo-Indian marriage ceremony is enchanting with music and special rituals along with the Holy Mass. The priest welcomes the couple as they walk along the aisle till they reach the altar. The ceremony involves a sermon by the priest called a homily emphasizing the sacredness and sanctity of marriage. Following the exchange of wedding rings, the bride and the groom hold each other’s right hand and make a solemn promise of lifelong commitment stating that they will stay together in thick and thin to each other in the name of God. This is followed by the blessings of the priest to lay the foundation of a new family based on love in Christ. Then they sign the marriage register.
Under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Kerala customs like ‘minukettu’, ‘mangalasutra’ and the concept of ‘manthrakodi’ crept into the marriage ceremony of the Anglo-Indians, especially among those section of them who follow the customs and traditions of the local community. (Minnu or Thali is a leaf shaped gold pendant with a cross sealed on it, worn on a thread with strands drawn from the sari (manthrakodi)). Those gathered during the wedding ceremony actively participate in all the rituals and shower their blessings on the couple. The ceremony is followed by a reception with a live band.26

Anglo Indians are very fond of fashion and dressing up. Clothes and adornment constitute a major portion of their family expenditure. Quite contrary to the interest of the women of Kerala, Anglo-Indians show very little interest in gold ornaments. They are more interested in clothes, especially in European style garments.27 Two piece dresses which stretch up to the feet, jackets that extent up to the knee, over coats, pants, suits, bush-shirts, jerkins and cow-boy jeans are some of their favourite clothing. They are people with great colour sense and prefer cosy and colourful dresses.28 For funeral ceremonies they wear black. The Anglo-Indian women usually wear frocks or blouses and skirts of different style. Mini-skirts and high heels are common.29 Dresses made up of gorgeous materials such as silk, georgette and nylon are trendy with upper class and middle class
women. Some girls also wear slacks, like boys. In dressing, the men use European outfits. The women first had dresses styled like the Portuguese and later adopted other European patterns. One speciality of some Luso-Indian women in Kerala was the ‘Kabaya’ (a Malaysian dress) with checked long cloth from hip to toe and a top without color and with long sleeves. This dress is still worn by Luso-Indian women in interior parts of Kerala. This was the dress of the women brought by Alfonso de Albuquerque from his Malacca mission, who were wedded to Portuguese soldiers in early 16th century.

But in recent years Anglo Indians follow the dressing patterns of the local people. On formal occasions they wear shirts, coats with stiff collars, bow-ties and boots, narrow lapels and boaters. In ordinary life the middle and lower class people are not very particular about their clothes whereas the upper class are very cautious and spend a large amount in procuring the latest varieties. Generally in many families they use old dresses for making outfits for the children. This is mainly due to economic reasons.

Short hair, miniskirts, facial make up and high heels are some of the identifying features of Anglo Indian women. They habitually visit beauty parlours and fashion centres. Unlike Indian women, they do not use flowers
or tilak or other ornaments to beautify their hair and face. The dress pattern followed by the Anglo Indians and Indian women has been mutually influenced. In the early period the use of the sari was very rare among the Anglo-Indian women. But later on they started wearing Indian clothes like sari and blouse and salwar-kameez. And on the other hand many women of Kerala have started to follow the Anglo-Indian style of dressing.

The Anglo-Indian influence in the food habits of Kerala is very obvious. The Anglo-Indian culture was evolved by combining both the European and Indian cultures, even though the community adopted the religion, manners and ways of dressing of their European forefathers, their food is a mixture of both western and Indian. Perhaps, the Anglo-Indian cuisine is the very first example of ‘fusion food’ in the world; it is a result of reinventing and revamping popular European dishes with a dash of exotic Indian spices giving it a completely new flavor. Thus a completely new contemporary cuisine came into existence, which was neither too bland nor too spicy, but with a distinctive flavor of its own. It became a direct reflection of the multi-cultural cuisine.

Anglo-Indian cuisine is a gourmet’s delight and is mostly prepared using English spices such as pepper, bay leaves, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon. Indian condiments such as chilies, cumin, coriander, turmeric, ginger,
garlic are also added in moderation. Yoghurt and milk are also used in certain preparations to offset extra pungency.\textsuperscript{37} The Luso-Indian food habits are unique; they prefer bread and meat stew for ‘Almosa’ (breakfast). They serve dishes like ‘Vindaloo’ (beef or pork) and ‘Cutles’ (cutlets). For evening snacks they make ‘sowlinge’ (with rice powder), ‘Penthe feethe’ (rice powder wet and shaped with a comb and fried in oil). They prepare soup on holidays and feast days.\textsuperscript{38}

Food habits constitute an important component of group identity. The merging up of the eastern and western culinary habits in the Anglo-Indian cuisine creates an enchanting experience of taste.\textsuperscript{39} Anglo-Indian cuisine reflects the cultural affinity, taste and style of England. The flavour in the Anglo-Indian kitchen reminds one of the fusions of traditional Indian and exotic western taste. Anglo-Indian special preparations, especially the Christmas cake evoke the sweet memories of Christmas with its pomp and pleasure. Christmas has its enduring charm and rich tradition and the Anglo-Indians added colors to it.\textsuperscript{40} Gloria Clifford of Fort Cochin seems excited while describing Christmas. The shops in Fort Cochin announce the arrival of Christmas with glittering decorations, colourful illuminations, Santa masks, Christmas tree and stars. For them the preparation for Christmas starts a month in advance. They make special plum cake and homemade wine. It is made of grape, banana, carrot and beetroot.
Christmas day is celebrated with a great banquet, and socializing on a large scale. It is celebrated with sports, games, music and dance.\textsuperscript{41} Such is the case with all the special occasions said, Mrs. Grace Rodridges.

The Anglo-Indians are non-vegetarians. They eat beef, pork and fish. Vegetables and eggs are also consumed. Fruit consumption is moderate while the consumption of milk and milk products is high. Staple foods are rice and wheat. Eating with a spoon and a fork is a typical habit. Some of them prepare wine in their houses using grapes and other fruits, which is specially served during marriages and festivals like Christmas, along with cake.\textsuperscript{42} Another special item of food they prepare is a roasted turkey. Among the economically weaker sections of their society, expensive food is being replaced by cheaper local food.

The naming of the dishes is unique and original with rhythmic sounds like Doldol, Kalkal, Ding-Ding and Posthole. While Anglo-Indian Cuisine is said to be influenced by the various European invasions in India, it was the British, who left an indelible mark on Kerala Cuisine. This new cuisine was often called “Club food”, referring to the food served even today in Country Clubs throughout India. Roasts, stews, bakes, sandwiches and white bread are a legacy of the British, and the Anglo-Indians took these to new heights, making them part of their daily cuisine.\textsuperscript{43} Other dishes such as fish and
chips, cutlets, croquettes, sausages, bacon, ham, egg variants, puddings, custards, and a savoury treat known as Welsh rarebit became a part of the Anglo-Indian culinary inventory.\textsuperscript{44}

The Sunday English Breakfast of eggs, bacon and kippers, buttered toast, cheese, butter, jams; English roast dinners complete with steamed vegetables, roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding and gravy, English sausages, colloquially known as “bangers and mash”, pies and puddings, especially the Yorkshire pudding and bread pudding, sandwiches became very popular.\textsuperscript{45} The concept of the English high tea in the afternoon was another remnant of the British.\textsuperscript{46}

The Anglo-Indians are very jubilant in nature. They are free from inhibitions and taboos attached to social gathering and free mingling. Both men and women freely mix and mingle with each other which were unfamiliar to the traditional Indian society Wine and cake are integral part of their life, indispensable for receiving gusts at home. At every occasion, the Anglo-Indians invariable offer wine and cake to every guest enters their homes. On Christmas time the use of wine increases many fold. The use of liquor is not strange in their social life. Both men and women take liquor. Women generally prefer beer and it is a usual thing at the dining table. Men take whisky or brandy. They love to take a \textit{chota peg}. The term \textit{Chota peg} is claimed to be of Anglo-Indian origin.\textsuperscript{47}
The baptism ceremony is another blissful occasion in an Anglo-Indian home. The birth of a child is often regarded as a divine blessing and there is no distinction between a boy and a girl. They wholeheartedly welcome the newborn. On the fourteenth day the christening rites will be performed as per Roman Catholic Church norms. Parents have the right to choose the godfather and godmother from among the relatives. The selection of the godparents has importance as they have great influence in the life of the child. The baptismal ceremony is followed by a splendid meal.47 ‘The Bowthise’ (Baptism) and wedding are the two instances where the Luso-Indians retain their identity. Banquet and posh dressing and dancing differentiate the Luso-Indian community from others. Cake and wine are served on occasions like baptism and wedding.48

Another exclusive Anglo-Indian custom is manifested in their funeral ceremony. Death is a solemn occasion. The well-knit relations of the Anglo-Indians are explicit at the funeral ceremony. The friends and relatives gather in large numbers and the women invariably wear black clothing based on their relation with the departed. Tremendous changes took place in the life of the Anglo-Indians and women have abandoned the habit of mourning in full black. Moreover, the Anglo Indians have given up many of the traditional rituals and practices mainly due to heavy expenses.
Kinship Relationship and Matrimonial Traditions

Family relations are very strong among Anglo-Indians. Their life in the railway colonies and cantonments has physically separated them from the mainstream of society. Their preferential attitude to interact with the Europeans and other Anglo-Indian groups virtually resulted in the development of socio-economic patterns of their own.49 Their employment in the Indian government services such as railways, customs, post and telegraph and the army necessitated frequent and periodic transfer from one place to another. This has ultimately disrupted their family life and many struggled hard to adjust to the changed situations causing their children to be poor performers.50

The Anglo-Indians follow the nuclear family system. Extended families are seldom found. Interpersonal relationships within the family are very strong and love and respect links the families together and quarrels are rare. Among them there is a great deal of cooperation on different occasions like birth, marriage, and festive occasions like Christmas and New Year and in times of suffering.51 Their religion and rituals help them to keep their solidarity. The Luso-Indians being ardent Catholics, apart from church services, family prayer is obligatory. After prayers the young members wish the elders ‘Boanoite’ (good night) and kiss them on their cheeks.
Women enjoyed respectable position in the family and are good housewives. They have the right to inheritance. There is great demand for Anglo-Indian women for placement as teachers, secretaries, nurses and in public relations. They have the potential and many are professionally qualified. In the social, economic, religious and political avenues, they perform at par with men.

Large scale migration has affected their kinship relations. Today there are only a few Anglo-Indian families in various Anglo-Indian settlements in Kerala like Cochin and Kollam as most of them have been migrated to different countries. Various associations of Anglo-Indians play significant role in strengthening their relations. The All India Anglo-Indian Association working today infuses a new hope to the remaining Anglo-Indians of Kerala.54

**Anglo-Indian Art and Architecture**

The coming of the Portuguese changed the style of Kerala Architecture. Till then there was no great difference in the architectural style followed by the Hindus and the Christians. The Portuguese introduced the Greco-Roman style of Architecture. They built the St. Francis Church in Cochin, the earliest centre of Anglo-Indians, in the Latin style. It was in this church that the body of Vasco da Gama was kept until it was taken to Portugal.55
This style of church construction gradually spread across the country very soon. They adopted new architecture not only in the construction of the churches but also of the houses. The churches were built in Gothic style. The fine architectural skills of these churches have left its lasting impressions on the many other churches built in Kerala later.\textsuperscript{56} There is a move from the Government of Kerala to recreate the old scenic beauty of these bygone eras in certain areas giving the street Portuguese, Dutch or British characteristics with a view of attracting tourists.\textsuperscript{57} During the time most of the Anglo Indian houses were known as bungalows. The traditional style of giving the family name to the houses changed under the Anglo Indian influence. For example ‘love dale’, ‘rose dale’, ‘love cottage’, ‘star dale’, ‘blue house’, ‘rose cottage’ are some of the new house names that gained ground.

The native rajas imposed a lot of restriction on the construction of buildings which continued up to the establishment of the Portuguese. The Raja of Cochin authorised the Portuguese to built buildings and fortresses with stones and tiles. The Portuguese constructed a palace at Mattanchery and handed it over to the Raja to be his palace. There were few buildings in Fort Cochin with underground cells; these cells were used to accommodate their slaves. They enjoyed a lot of privileges and their ancestors lived along
the important streets of Lilly Street and Burgher Street. The architectural style further improved and local people made a lot of buildings in the same manner during the British rule.

The Anglo-Indians comprise of both professional and amateur artists and architects. Tilly Kettle, John Zoffany and Arthur Davis were the experts who arrived in India in the second half of the Eighteenth century. John Smart and Ozias Humphery were the great artists of the time. They were followed by renowned British artists like George Chinnery. All these artists painted in oils, but the most typical medium was water color. The trend in Britain was for charming, raw nature and that the artists visit India to depict an extraordinarily inconsistent India with the description of travelers and later, of missionaries. Captain William, Captain Grindlay and Sir Charles D’oly were some of the comparatively proficient amateur artists of the 19th century. By the latter half of the Nineteenth century, the interest in the picturesque had diminished and even professional artists limited themselves to narrative paintings demonstrating some unique and easily identifiable moral precept. The European intervention helped to stir up native interest in art.

The influence of the British is more conspicuous in the field of architecture. The house-building pattern quite common in Kerala is peculiar
for Luso-Indians. Usually in front and in two sides there will be the veranda. The front portion is built as a portico for the guests. Chair and table were the important furniture in the guest room. The hall is called ‘saala’, the kitchen is called ‘Kusinja’. All the houses had separate dining rooms and bed rooms. The houses were provided with wide doors and windows. The roof will be tiled and these were called ‘Portuguese tiles’ till recently.

The microscopic Anglo-Indian community’s contribution to India’s mainstream cultural scene has been varied and significant. Stephen Padua remarks, “There was a time when we were the complacent lot, cocooned in their own world. Slowly the scenario changed— the Indian population had to meet the demands of the day, we were still basking in past glory. All avenues had closed; the rest had overtaken them by leaps and bounds in most spheres. Unable to survive, we were left groping in the dark. But survive we did. Our optimism won the day for us. The warm, loving people that we are, we showed the world that we had neither a care nor a worry in the world. Ready to break into a song or a dance when the occasion demanded, we were full of the joie de vivre of life. Those who understood the worth of our culture and way of living imbibed it. Our customs and manners soon became theirs and we too absorbed the good from the Indian cultural scene in a mutually beneficial exchange. Still as a community we have a
strong cultural identity of our own, which is the very essence of our existence”.

Anglo – Indian Education; A Critical Evaluation

The Anglo Indian contribution in the field of education is remarkable. They are people whose mother tongue is English and they follow a western pattern of living. The English language is the symbol of their identity. They established Anglo-Indian schools mainly to foster the English language and their culture. Therefore the Anglo-Indians prefer Anglo-Indian schools and in its absence, as a lesser option they go for other English medium schools. Although Anglo-Indian schools have their reputation and attraction all over the country, the Anglo-Indians do not benefit much out of it. Very few go for higher education and advanced learning. Before and during the early days of the post-independent period employment to some of the subordinate positions in the Indian government services were reserved for the Anglo-Indians. Therefore they seldom bothered about higher education till the schemes for ‘Indianisation’ was implemented.

The Anglo-Indian Schools were established for the educational advancement of the community. There were day schools and residential schools. Due to the firm base in English and considerably higher quality of education imparted by the Anglo-Indian schools, these schools were
preferred by the upper-class people who wanted their children to be trained in an academic environment and to acquire fluency in the English language. Anglo-Indians are offered “free ships” in this school but it is inadequate to accommodate all the Anglo Indian children. Economic issues kept the Anglo-Indian students outside these schools. Thus the Anglo-Indian schools appear to fail the very children that they were set up to help.62

Besides the economic issue, the Anglo-Indian students faced the problem of learning Indian languages. They were poor performers in class for the Indian languages. Often they failed to speak, read and write Indian languages and hence they became the repeaters in the class. They were branded the “duffers” and were accused of disrupting the class. The Anglo-Indian students were to a large extent ignored in the classroom. The sad part is that the system has not been made accountable for the academic failure of the Anglo-Indian students. Anglo-Indian English medium schools did not have a well thought out plan to teach English as a second language to the students of the community. The third issue is religion. Approaching the question of religion was hampered with political problems. Any attempt to change or reinterpret religious education could well be treated as silliness or deception. Christianity at the present time is taught outside the school timetable. The schools experience of religious education went on alienating the Anglo-Indians from the non Anglo-Indians.63 Anglo-Indian schools were
established in India for two reasons. The first was that the British colonialists wanted a flexible, economical, literate and faithful workforce to fill “reserved” low-level positions in crucial services such as the railways, customs and excise, post and telegraph and police. The second was that the Christian missionaries wanted to evangelize the Indian population and saw the Anglo-Indian population as an ideal entry point.

The British left the community a legacy for subordination. The schools consciously mould a racial, linguistic and religious framework of the Anglo-Indians to their political, social and economic roles in India. The basic suppositions which trigger this, helps explain the colonial legacy which still exists in these schools. The obvious objective of the British administrators and Christian missionaries was to trim down disparity of educational opportunity for the Anglo-Indians. However, the educational system did not decrease inequality because the amount of schooling attained by Anglo-Indians has always been disproportionate when compared with non Anglo-Indians. Moreover, it has not been the ultimate motto of the colonial administrators nor Christian missionaries to produce students who were competitive, motivated and desirous of pursuing higher education. Disparities in the Anglo-Indian’s educational accomplishment and the rapid ‘Indianisation’ of the services affected the income of the Anglo-Indian families.\textsuperscript{64}
The social implications of the Anglo-Indian school system are significant. It reproduced the class structure of a great divide which the British government and Christian missionaries had created for the community. The schools also helped to preserve and extend the power, prestige and wealth of the British government and Christian missionaries, by linking the English language and the Christian religion to a specific community. The British educational policy has some specific motives and the Anglo-Indian schools reflected these policies to some extent. It convinced the Anglo-Indian community that they were the best workers in India for subordinate jobs. The British recognized the necessity of restricting educational outcomes for the Anglo-Indians. The Anglo-Indians built up their ambitions on this limited educational experience which resulted in what they were given to believe was a fair shot at unequal economic reward. Young men left school and entered subordinate services which lasted a lifetime. They rarely left school to enter higher education.

The predesigned educational policy and framework led to an economic structure within the Anglo-Indian social progression in which disadvantage was worn as a badge of honor. They felt satisfied and never tried to think beyond. Ambitions and initiatives were chained and fettered on a friendly comfortable social structure. They believed that to serve the British, speak the English language and attend a Christian church was the honorable
thing to do with their life. The unequal incomes and inequality of access to higher education lay in the dynamics of their economic life. This determined institutionalized disparity in educational and economic outcomes created an element of backwardness in the community. On linguistic terms Anglo-Indians never felt and did not want to be called backward because they speak English as mother-tongue. The existence of the exclusive much-sought-after Anglo-Indian schools prevented Anglo-Indians from addressing their own educational backwardness.

Anglo-Indian culture has its innate beauty and charisma. Its customs and manners are unique. But with the onslaught of time and external interferences, their culture underwent gradual transformation. Most of their customs and manners were either ignored or vanished. But at the same time they have not fully integrated into the community of Kerala. This created an identity crisis which clubbed with their social alienation and economic crisis compelled into migration. The surviving Anglo-Indians fail to disseminate their culture in its totality to the younger generations. Asserting the documented sources and field visits the Anglo-Indian community is still preserving a blend of European and Indian cultural traits but, neither western nor eastern, save a fusion which has an identity and uniqueness of its own. Intricate features of their culture including their
language, family life, marriage, religion, education, cuisine and social standing has been analysed. These are largely contributing factors in the making of a community structure.

Notes and References


14 Interview with Nelson Rebeira, Manjanakkad, Cochin.


26 Interview with Nancy Rebeira of Cochin on 28-08-2012.


40 Interview with Gloria Clifford of Fort Cochin on 18-08-2012.

41 Interview with Mrs. Grace Rodridges of Vypin on 21-05-2012.


46 Theomothy Rims, *Anglo-indian cusine; an art of synthesis culture*, New Delhi, 1995, p.34.
Chota Peg is a vernacular term for a drink of brandy or whisky and soda water, which one drink in the early evening on the veranda while wearing one’s soalr topi.


50  S. Afsheen, Under Five Flags: Life Like a Turbulent River Flows, Bloomington(USA), 2011, p. 71.


55  Robert Arnett, India Unveiled, Georgia, 2006, p. 103.

56  Sreedhara Menon, Cultural Heritage of Kerala, Kottayam, 2008, p. 141.
57  The Hindu, 6 June 2012.


