Chapter VI
Anglo-Indian Community: Social Organizations and Social Securities

The organizations of the Anglo-Indian community act as repositories and transmitters of their culture. The Anglo-Indian community started to form organizations in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The first organization set up by the Anglo-Indian community was the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association in 1876. The Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association of Southern India was formed in 1879. At the turn of the century, the Imperial Anglo-Indian Association was formed which was, after the death of its founder, revived as the Anglo-Indian Empire League. Later, in the 1920s, the Anglo-Indian Association of Bengal was renamed as the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association. This is considered the parent organization of the present All-India Anglo-Indian Association, the most dominant and influential Anglo-Indian organization in India.

Any ethnic community has two distinct aspects. One, a psychological state in which individuals think of themselves as part of a distinct collective whose members share similar sets of interest, values and ideologies. Ethnicity is an umbrella term which facilitates “groupness” among individuals. Since collectivities are not “things that just happen”, the politicization of group membership in a collectivity often takes place on the basis of ethnicity. The second aspect is that these organizations help to meet some social needs of its members that are important to sustain the daily activities of life. The social organizations that any ethnic community sets up may be both integrative and disruptive, that is bringing people together and keeping them apart. In an ethnic community, the members of the same ethnic group come together and keep the non-members out of its boundary. Such inclusion and exclusion play significant role for the ethnic community. Goodrich has rightly suggested that the Anglo-Indians ceased to exist as a disparate aggregation of individuals long ago. Their distinct physical characteristics and their social

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and cultural features brought them together to form a collectivity. The social organizations started to form only after this formation of a group identity started to take shape. This community self-awareness emerged slowly as the result of the discrimination against them by the British and rejection by the Indians. The psychological and social need for a clear identity presaged the gradual development of an ethnocentric outlook which made possible a sense of belonging. The aim of this chapter is to investigate some important aspects of the ethnicity of this community and to show how this ethnic identity is gender-biased.

In the early half of the nineteenth century the organized social life of the Anglo-Indian community slowly started to take shape. The first unsure steps towards forming organizations paved the way for a more collective and organized social activism, participation and leadership. Over the years, as the sense of growing deprivation gradually thickened, the Anglo-Indian community started to form their own organizations as a survival strategy and defensive action. One of the first organizations to be established in Bengal was the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association in 1876. Later on, a number of organizations comprising of Anglo-Indian membership and that of Europeans and Indian Christians started to come up. Among them, the Anglo-Indian Study Circle, the Anglo-Indian Youth League and the Britasian League were significant bodies formed in the first of the twentieth century. The Britasian League was established in the 1930s with headquarters in Calcutta to facilitate the resettlement at McCluskiegunj, for the Anglo-Indians, to generate a spirit of responsibility among its members and with plans for the development of cooperative agricultural and industrial marketing facilities. This organization had an official journal named “The Britasian Gazette” which preached the gospel of a “back to the land movement” but with an emphasis on industrial development as a handmaiden of agriculture. This was the time when the Anglo-Indian community had started to look forward to settle at a place called McCluskiegunge, near

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3 Gist and Wright, Marginality and Identity (1973), p 99.
The All India Anglo-Indian Association

This is one of the national organizations of the Anglo-Indian community and by far the most influential organization of the Anglo-Indian community. It has over seventy affiliated branches spread over the entire country. Each local branch has complete autonomy in the selection of corps of officers and committee personnel and is free to determine the function of the local organization. However the local associations traditionally support the policies of the national body. The national body holds an annual convention which is attended by officers and delegates from the local branches. Apart from social activities, this convention holds meetings on the various issues and problems the community faces. Formal action is taken following the resolutions offered by the delegates. The branches of the Association at the state level also hold meetings on issues that are of immediate concern to its members. In defence of its own interests the Association drafted its policies more as an ameliorative measure. It was considered a shield of protection for the community.  

The most important function of the Association is to support the Anglo-Indian schools through scholarships and other forms of help to Anglo-Indian students. Through its leaders, it has spearheaded efforts to continue English as a medium of instruction at these schools. Earlier, when the political position of the community was in doubt it defended the right of the Anglo-Indian minority to special representation at the national and state legislatures. It maintains a special Employment Bureau for the Anglo-Indians in Delhi in addition to extending support to its members from the local branches. It also collects funds for the benefit of the needy in times of emergencies.

The All India Anglo-Indian Association with all its branches works as a functional entity, providing structural support to the community. Few well-known minorities with dual or

4 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
mixed parental heritage have been able to develop such organizational structure with mass support from the members of the community. The leaders of the community from the past, such as Gidney or Barrow or Frank Anthony, or from the present, have shown effective direction and resolution to formulate policies which show an organized endeavour for social action.

The membership of the Association is strictly limited to those who can prove their European link from their father’s side, or to those who have been members for more than two generations. Nevertheless, the Association strictly follows the condition of reckoning descent as prescribed in the Indian Constitution as the basis for granting membership. The total number of membership in Kolkata is more than a thousand. Membership is granted annually. There is a provision for life membership as well.

The journal of the Association called “The Review” is perhaps the most circulated journal of the community. It is the principal means of communication between members of the different Branches. It is boldly called “the most widely circulated monthly in India” and serves as a personalized organ of the President of the Association as it contains his speeches, organizational activities, photographs, etc. in each issue. It also contains information about the community, about its leaders, social festivals and all other activities of the community. It also focuses on individual Anglo-Indians who receive an award or recognition. Photographs of every distinguished Anglo-Indian are also displayed with equal recognition in the journal.

The Anglo-Indian women who are members of the Association have to prove that they are descendants of a European progenitor. Their children can claim membership only if they can prove the same from their father’s side. This means children of Anglo-Indian mothers and non-Anglo-Indian fathers are not considered for membership. It also means being an Anglo-Indian mother to children does not guarantee any help from the Association. The same is not true of the Anglo-Indian men. Their children can directly become members of the Association. The schools and other offices of the government at present recognize the role of the mother and consider them to be guardians of their wards,
but such is not the case at the Anglo-Indian Association, the most important of all the organizations the Anglo-Indians have. Though only the paternal line is recognized for reckoning descent by the Constitution of India, it does not specify any criteria for membership of any Anglo-Indian organization. The policy of determining who can be a member and who is to be excluded was the sole prerogative of the leaders of the community who had drafted the policy. This implies a clear gender bias in the formulation of the membership policy of the most accepted and arguably the biggest organization of the community.

The Social Welfare and Social Security Services of the Community

There are numerous organizations that carry out social welfare services for the community. The *East India Charitable Trust (EICT)* with its headquarters in Kolkata is responsible for financing and managing numerous welfare activities in West Bengal and the surrounding states. This organization was established in 1950 to coordinate various charitable activities like financing numerous scholarships for Anglo-Indian children and youth. In Kolkata alone, the Trust maintains and supervises *Tollygunge Homes*, *St. Mary’s Home and Hospital*, *Mary Cooper Home*, *Lavinia House*, *EICT Nursery School*, *St. John’s Baby Clinic*, *Women’s Friendly Society*, *the Anglo-Indian Association Calcutta Canteen Boys’ Hostel*, and the *Sherwood House Trust*. The *Tollygunge Homes* provide residential and medical facilities for sixty elderly European or Anglo-Indian persons or of persons of any Christian denomination. The *St. Mary’s Home and Hospital* accommodates sixty five elderly European or Anglo-Indian women of the Protestant faith. The *Mary Cooper Home* accommodates thirty four elderly European or Anglo-Indian persons of either sex who are Protestants. *Lavinia House* is a rescue home for Anglo-Indian girls. The *Women’s Friendly Society* employs Anglo-Indian and Indian Christian women in making garments. The profits from the sales are used for charitable purposes.\(^7\)

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Lawrence DeSouza Home, Kolkata

The Lawrence DeSouza Home was built in the 1870s. At that time, the idea of an old age home was totally absent in Indian psyche and value-orientation. Older people in eighteenth-century Britain did not judge the quality of their lives according to a binary model of dependence versus autonomy. Instead, aging men and women sought to remain closely connected to their families and communities through continued participation in the reciprocal obligations that characterized relationships of the time. Family social ties generally remained strong and intergenerational communication frequent throughout a person’s life. Aged parents gave moral, physical and financial support to their children whenever possible and hoped that they in turn could rely on their children, when the need arose. Older people in this period often turned both to family members and to the assistance that was available to them in their local communities through informal sources of charity and through the formal system of poor relief that has existed in England since the foundation of Elizabethan Poor Laws.

Eighteenth century and early nineteenth century English families certainly felt that there was a moral obligation to support their elderly members. Moreover this duty was established by law; even if the law was seldom applied. Clearly there was a cultural ideal of familial responsibility for elder-care at that time. But importantly all older individuals who lived during this period were expected to look after their own needs for as long as possible. Once the necessity arose, both family and community had an obligation to support them, but the aged themselves were expected to save for their “evening days”. This means that there was an individualistic orientation but there was a strong collective spirit as well. The development of modern industrial capitalism began to change attitudes towards familial and community support structures. With the emergence of instrumentalist values of individualism, according to Joan Scott and Louise Tilly, the factory girls in northern England sought to retain a portion of their wage for their own consumption. It is critical to their story that the same girls, after marriage, assumed the
traditional role of the nurturing and sacrificial wife and mother.\textsuperscript{8} Even though the development of individualist values did not have the same degree of impact on wifehood and motherhood, it had a much more significant influence on norms of inter-generational inter-dependence, necessitating a different orientation for social welfare policies. Germany became the first nation in the world to adopt an old-age social security programme in 1889. The idea was to do something for those who were unable to work by reason of age and invalidity. In the U.K., in contrast, such schemes were introduced only the 1930s. In the nineteenth century, there were “poor houses” and shelter homes, either publicly maintained or maintained through private charity; to support and house some categories of dependents construed as weak and vulnerable, which included children, needy persons and the old. The first ever old-age home was built in the U.S. in 1906. The concept travelled slowly to India. The enclaved nature of capitalist modernity in the colonial period did not change dramatically after Independence- one of its corollary being the persistence of the values of family. Given that public systems of social welfare never grew to any significant scale in the country, meant that the care of the ill and the aged continued to be delegated to the family. Indeed, the discursive dominance of the ‘joint family’ has had long-term legal, social and cultural consequences. From the early decades of the twentieth century, popular imagination has been saturated with a titanic resistance to forces of nuclearisation of families. Once again we have a vicious cycle- the values of familial interdependence allowed the state to defer its responsibility for public systems of social welfare- and this meant that the care of the ill and the aged continued to be delegated to the family. It is only now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, that the idea of old-age homes is gaining some ground. In this context, the introduction of old age homes and such welfare measures among the Anglo-Indian community as early as the late nineteenth century is striking evidence of its difference from other communities in this country.

We can speculate that the practice of nuclear families and the cultivation of individualistic values began early in the Anglo-Indian community. By the late nineteenth

century, there were an overwhelming number of broken families in the community. The rates of divorce and separation were quite high at that time. Moreover as young Indian/Anglo-Indian girls married European men, desertion or widowhood was also a very important feature of this community in Kolkata. We can cite the example of the Graham’s Home in Kalimpong, which was built to accommodate Anglo-Indian children who were orphaned due to the death or separation of parents in the later half of the nineteenth century. So the purpose of building the Lawrence DeSouza Home in Kolkata substantiates the claim of its founder. In the Will and Testament of Lawrence DeSouza it was clearly stated that the sum of money he entrusted should be used in purchasing a house in Dharamtollah area for a Home either for orphan girls and boys up to the age of ten or for Anglo-Indian widows in utterly destitute condition. So in 1876, the Home for the Aged came up at 138, Lenin Sarani (formerly known as Dharamtollah Street) to house aged widows or spinster Anglo-Indian women whose husbands or parents were in a position not lower than that of a clerk or an assistant. The Home is unique in that it was established exclusively for the benefit of the Anglo-Indian women and is run by All Anglo-Indian Committee in accordance with the testator’s stated wishes.

The Home is built to accommodate women in single rooms, double rooms and a dormitory. According to the Will and Testament of Lawrence DeSouza, a sum of Rs. 200,000 was to be used exclusively for the home to support the women on the income of three-fourths of the capital. The funds were invested in Government securities and are administered by the official trustee of Government of West Bengal. While the income from the Trust Fund might have been adequate more than a century ago, today the fund is not adequate to cover the needs of the women. Over the years, the committee had to introduce and subsequently increase contribution from inmates to meet expenses. The committee receives help from organizations and individuals here and abroad.9

The committee scrutinizes applications and then selects aged Anglo-Indian women after a short interview. The criterion for selection is that the women have to prove their Anglo-Indian heritage, their European patrilineal connection, their destitute state, and their

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9 Information gathered from one of the members of the Trustee, of Government of West Bengal.
“genteel origin” and the occupational status of their parents or husbands. At present the Home has eighteen inmates, their age profile from 67 to 92. Enid, Jenny, Joyce, Sybil and Anna, (names changed) five ladies were ready to sit for interview sessions. They answered questions on why they selected an Anglo-Indian Aged Home over any other. The answer was quick and clear: “I loved to go to parties, dance and enjoy… and this is the place where no one would question why I like it, because everyone knows why it is so”. Enid lived in Garden Reach, Kolkata, before coming here and making this her home. Jenny replied that she knows one of her friends had gone to Mary Cooper’s Home, also meant for the grannies, but she felt very uneasy to go there because the Home serves South-Indian dishes as there are more South-Indian Christian inmates than Anglo-Indians. As such, Jenny decided to come to Lawrence DeSouza because this was the place, where she could get “her food”.

The Superintendent looks after the day affairs and oversees the house-keeping and ensures a typical Anglo-Indian fare on the table. The ladies start their day with “palack ka cha” and the lunch is mainly rice, dal, Jhal-frezzy (minced beef), Hussaini curry, or Vindaloo. Dinner is mainly pan cakes, puddings, ice-creams and soups. The Good Friday special menu is dal, Philori-Bharta, fried brinjal, Stick and Stone, Yam Bharta and juices. A Christmas lunch would be pepper water, Pantras (pancake with stuffed meat), yellow rice or coconut rice, potato cake, pudding, custard, cake and ice-cream. Other than this there are parties and some games on special days. Anna says this was the reason for her selecting this Home because she wanted to feel at home. As she has a habit of smoking and drinking, she thought she might be restricted if she had registered with any other old-age home. The other inmates, from other communities, might not have felt this to be “normal” and might have ostracized her. Such apprehensions had influenced her choice. The Lawrence DeSouza Home was built with a specific purpose- to look after old women. Such a purpose in itself proves that the community was patriarchal in trying to do something for its women. This patriarchal practice of caring for the women of the community with a sense of pity is an interesting aspect of the community. It is a common practice of patriarchal ideology to consider women as weak and vulnerable and therefore in need of protection. In this belief system, men are considered to be strong enough to
withstand any pressure and therefore institutionalised care is reserved for woman. This is perhaps the reason for building an old-age home for women. The founder’s commitment to provide institutional care for women was based on the assumption, common in many parts of Europe at that time, that women deprived of male support were especially vulnerable and required public support.

**Calcutta Anglo-Indian Service Society (CAISS), Kolkata**

This organization was set up in the late 1976. Since then the society has been available for the less fortunate and marginalized individuals of the community in Kolkata. Caring for the aged, the children and those with a special need, assisting in times of crisis by being available and by doing whatever is possible, reaffirming the dignity of each individual, and encouraging each one to face life’s challenges are the objectives of this organization.

For the past thirty-one years CAISS\(^\text{10}\) has been involved in meeting the immediate needs of the community. It helps the aged by providing assistance in the form of rations, medical check-ups, medicines and a monthly pension. For the children it organizes support for their education in the form of fees, books, school charges, boarding fees, uniform, tiffin and transport expenses. The organization also helps those who need steady income assistance by finding them suitable jobs, providing job-skills training and micro-loans to set up small-scale enterprises. It also assists the homeless with shelter for the night and a “warm meal”.

A group of experienced volunteers work for CAISS under the competent supervision of the convener Philomena Eaton. The social welfare panel of the organization sits on the first Sunday of the month at the **Lawrence DeSouza Home**. A monthly pension of four hundred rupees and rations consisting of two kilograms of rice, flour, potatoes, a kilogram of onion and a half kilogram of milk powder are given to around one hundred and thirty Anglo-Indians. This event is sponsored by the **Calcutta Tiljallah Relief Fund**

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and CAISS. The same amount of rations and pension are also given to other persons through the *The Love of God—Hamilton Trust Fund*. Others also receive a pension of four hundred rupees sent by personal sponsors with rations from CAISS. Bus fare of Rupees twenty-five each is given to twenty-five beneficiaries travelling from far places like Howrah, Garia, Barrackpore and Santoshpur. A distress allowance of Rupees hundred is given to persons in difficulties. Reimbursement of medical expenses is paid to around fifty persons including three children. The medical expenses for children are paid from the Children’s Welfare Fund. Families in distress are also sponsored with House Rent and an allowance of Rupees Five hundred under the Christopher Road Overseas Project (CROP). Security deposit of Rupees twenty thousand are paid for one family, through CROP Project.

**Night Shelter organized by CAISS**

The night shelter at 98/2, S.N. Banerjee Road is run with the generous support of the Kaylou Trust and it provides a home to the Anglo-Indian pavement-dwellers and also helps them regain self respect. Under the Superintendents, the residents come in at 6:30 p.m. After a bath, dinner is served, after which they watch television, read the newspapers or converse with each other on the day’s happenings. At 10:00 p.m. they retire to their beds. The day begins at 6:00 a.m. The residents wash their clothes, have breakfast and leave by 7:00 a.m. for their daily work. After a stay period of about three months, the able ones are sent out for jobs, most of which are with accommodation. If the jobs do not provide accommodation, they are helped in addition to the money they earn so that they can get into paid hostels. For those not fit enough to work they are put into Homes. CAISS sees that they leave the Shelter with the dignity which they had lost. The ground floor of the *Lawrence DeSouza Home* is used for teaching self-employment skills like stitching and computer lessons. There are some who take these lessons organized by CAISS. *Anglo-Indian Appeal Fund of Adelaide* sees to it that the Shelter runs properly and it also helps in other fund-raising activities.

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Calcutta Tiljallah Relief Fund

*Calcutta Tiljallah Relief* (CTR)\(^1\)\(^2\) is a US-based charity, approved and registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a “Not for Profit” organization in 1998. It was founded by Blair Williams. The CTR has the following objectives:

\(a\) Providing pensions to seniors: Three hundred and one seniors are given a monthly pension— one hundred and fifty-one receive such pensions in Kolkata, a hundred Anglo-Indians in Chennai, thirty in Bangalore and fifteen in Vijayawada. From 2009 pensions were increased from Rupees five thousand and four hundred to Rupees six thousand per year with an addition of Rupees one thousand and two hundred for rations supplement added for all.

\(b\) Educating children: This organization has educated two hundred and eleven children so far— forty boarders and sixty day-scholars in Kolkata, fifteen boarders and forty-two day-scholars in Chennai, thirty-five day-scholars in Hyderabad and nineteen day-scholars in Vijayawada.

In 1999, CTR began by creating a pension scheme for about twenty seniors in Calcutta, administered through CAISS. Also in 1999, CTR Canada had a fundraiser function in Toronto, and from then on CTR had established its presence in London. In 2000, the organization added about twenty seniors in Madras, administered by the charity “Anglo-Indian Concern”. In addition, in 2000, the organization started to sponsor the education of children— ten day-scholars and ten boarders. In 2002 it had spread out to Australia setting up branches in Melbourne and Sydney and had fundraisers in both cities. Today the organization has branches in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, London, Toronto, and New Jersey. Money is banked in the country where it is collected and sent directly to India. Each city has a coordinator. The project administrators are located in Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Going forward, CTR is adopting more senior programmes and sponsoring the education of more children.

\(^1\) Information gathered from- http://www.blairrw.org/ctr/about.htm, visited on 22 December 2009.
Dr. Graham’s Home, Kalimpong

This is a Home for Anglo-Indian children of the Eastern Himalayan tea gardens who were rescued, and given a future, by Dr. John Anderson Graham, a Scottish Missionary in Kalimpong at the beginning of the twentieth Century. *Dr. Graham’s Homes*, founded by John Anderson Graham in 1900 (known as St. Andrew’s Colonial Homes until 1947), is a co-educational boarding school in Kalimpong, North-East India. The term “Homes” was borrowed from children’s settlements like those of Dr. Barnado and William Quarrier. The inspiration comes from the work of these and other pioneers. In 1900, the founder, the Rev. Dr. John Anderson Graham, felt the need for providing care and training for destitute Anglo-Indian children, who under the appalling circumstances prevailing at the time, appeared doomed to a most miserable existence, with no hope for the future. It was with this thought in mind and vision and enthusiasm that Dr. Graham of Kalimpong, took into his care six small children in a rented building in 1900. It was from this humble beginning that Dr. Graham embarked on the project of constructing and developing the institution we now know as *Dr. Graham’s Homes* which was so renamed in the memory of the founder who died in 1942. By 1903, the school began to stress on formal education. A headmaster and five teachers were appointed. By 1910, there were a dozen teachers and after the First World War, the school had expanded to such an extent there were twenty-one members in the teaching staff. Students now began taking the higher grade and BOAT examinations. By the end of Second World War, candidates were being prepared for Matriculation/School Final and Cambridge School Certificate examination, the terminating qualifications in the school at that time. Dr. Graham’s one great aim was to make the Homes as self-supporting as possible. Consequently, children performed all the chores from scrubbing and keeping the cottage clean, to preparing the meals. The first two decades witnessed an incredible expansion—the growth of cottages housing over five hundred children, a school, a farmstead, a workshop and play grounds. The efforts were supported and encouraged by Sir John Woodburn, the then Governor of Bengal and the first President of the Homes. The first cottage was appropriately named “Woodburn Cottage”. The foundation stone was laid

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by the President in 1900. Having made this start, Dr. Graham and the Board of Management launched on a campaign of publicity and appeal. There was a significant demand growing for the new school in the hills. In 1902 there were seventy-two children in residence. In the same year the children came from almost all Provinces of Eastern India and after that from other places like Madras and Secunderabad, Punjab, Bombay, Bangalore, etc. By 1910, the number of students had risen to three hundred and five. Hardly an area of India was unrepresented. The Lucia King Cottage was opened on Foundation day (24 September 1910). The cottage was to be used for the smallest children and later on was turned into the training ground for Nursery Nurses. Their training was on the lines of that in the Norland Institute, London, and the object was to prepare a well-equipped class of girls to be children’s nurses. The curriculum proposed was that after passing the seventh standard, the girls (who already had a thorough training in domestic work in the cottages) should get special training in the following:

1. Management of young children;

2. Kindergarten teaching so as to be able to begin the education of young children;

and

3. Dressmaking so that they may be able to cut out and make children’s clothes.

At the Homes, children are given the very best in education and skills. The boarding school aims to make responsible citizens of tomorrow. A child attending the Homes will get all the advantages of a school education. It costs about USD 1000 each year to educate, clothe and provide nutritious food to one child. To take a full sponsorship of a child is to sign up for a “Daddy Bear” sponsorship. Moreover the school authorities also encourage part sponsorship which is USD 10 per month or USD 100 per year—called a “Care Bear” sponsorship. Anyone taking a “Daddy Bear” sponsorship will choose from the children listed and will get a personalized letter every quarter from the child and a half yearly report on the child’s progress. On signing up for a “Care Bear” sponsorship, a child will be nominated for the sponsor. The sponsor will receive an E-mail twice in a year from the child.
Social Clubs

One of the first clubs where the Eurasians frequently went was the East India Bengal Club of Calcutta founded in 1825. The preamble of the club clearly mentioned the following about the Eurasians or the Anglo-Indians:

We are considered, we all know, as a separate class of society. We are deserted by Europeans in this country; and although united with them by the most sacred bonds of relationships, we are avoided and looked down upon as inferiors.\(^{14}\)

As the Anglo-Indian community crystallized through the years of colonial rule numerous clubs were formed, most of which had a short span of life. These clubs usually had both expressive and instrumental functions. They were considered expressive because they provided opportunities to the Anglo-Indians to share collectively in the spirit of good fellowship and were considered instrumental because they afforded an appropriate mechanism for formulation and promotion of organized programmes of welfare, education and recreation.\(^{15}\) During the British rule in India, many clubs were maintained for the exclusive benefit of Europeans and prestigious Indians or foreigners. Generally, Anglo-Indians were excluded from membership of these clubs. This policy of exclusion of some clubs applied to Indians as well. But interestingly the Anglo-Indian women who visited these clubs were subjected to more discrimination than Anglo-Indian men. The British women viewed women of the Anglo-Indian community with much malice.\(^{16}\) In the words of Frank Anthony, noted leader of the community:

the British women pursued their social snobbery with a certain feline deadliness…..thus not only the Anglo-Indian women but British women married to Anglo-Indians who happened to be members of the “burra” clubs

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were usually pointed targets not only of snobbery but of every refinement of feminine vengefulness. 17

After independence the membership policies of some of the European clubs were changed to admit Indians and even Anglo-Indians. But all did not change at the same time. In the early 1960s the Indian government as well as some private groups and individuals protested against discriminatory policies of admission and later on such policies were modified. In fact non-Anglo-Indians represent the majority members of the clubs initially built by the Europeans. The *Calcutta Football Club* was initially a European organization where numerous Anglo-Indians are now included as members. The *Gidney Club* in New Delhi initially organized for the benefit of the Anglo-Indians has adopted open membership policy but non-Anglo-Indians are only admitted as associate or honorary members.

**The Calcutta Rangers Club**

This is the most influential Anglo-Indian organization in Kolkata. Originally known as the *Calcutta Naval Volunteers’ Athletic Club* this is one of the oldest clubs in Kolkata founded in 1896 under the Presidency of Captain E.W. Petley. Mr. L.M.K. Macmillan was its first Honorary General Secretary. Mr. Petley remained as the President till 1898. In 1898 the *Calcutta Naval Volunteers Athletic Club* was transformed into the *Calcutta Rangers Club* with W.J. Bradshaw as the President and Mr. L.M.K. Macmillan as the Honorary Secretary. The objective of the club was to participate in and promote all athletic games, provide indoor amusement on the club premises, to embark upon any activities which would be of financial benefit to the club, and encourage whatever was considered necessary to foster a spirit of goodwill and sociability among the members of the club. In 1937 the club shifted from Stephen House to its current address of Government Place East. Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans were eligible for admission to the club.

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17 Ibid.
The Rangers Club won the Beighton Cup in hockey nine times, the last being in 1942. They currently field a cricket team in the Cricket Association of Bengal’s First Division League. The Calcutta Rangers Club Sweepstakes was held four times in a year and were linked to the races such as the Viceroy Cup and the St. Leger in India and the St. Leger and the Derby in the United Kingdom. The Rangers Club has a distinction of producing many outstanding sport persons, mostly men but also a few notable sportswomen—Leslie Claudius, Cyril Hodges, Garney Nyss, Terry D’Sena, Lumdsen brothers, Vaes Paes, Dulcie Beake, Jennifer Paes, Linda D’Cruz and Leander Paes. In 1944, the Rangers Club started its own Education Fund to assist the weaker sections of present and past members’ children. The club made an annual donation of ten thousand rupees towards this fund. In the early 1940s the club maintained a “soup and supper kitchen” at Ripon Street and at Kidderpore. However due to paucity of funds these two establishments have closed down. In 1960 the club donated money for setting up of a hospital for patients suffering from tuberculosis at Jadavpur and also presented the Hospital with a van from the proceeds of the Sweepstakes. In 1970 the club discontinued the Rangers Club Sweepstakes and put the surplus money into two trust funds— the Calcutta Rangers Educational Fund and the West Bengal Charitable Fund with the objective of promoting the weaker section of the Anglo-Indian community with medical and educational assistance. The Educational Trust Fund provides education for approximately two hundred and fifty children annually and the West Bengal Charitable Trust provides medical aid for about 80-100 Anglo-Indians.

In April, 1946, during the Presidency of Mr. B.H. Beake, the club had a membership of over seven hundred. However due to mass migration the community lost many of its members and consequently the membership of this club too dwindled. The present strength is of approximately two hundred Anglo-Indians in both Gents and Ladies sections. Most of the social clubs allowed women only in their capacity as wives and daughters and did not grant them full membership. This meant that while women had the use of the facilities of the clubs, they had no say in the administration and no voting rights. This rule has changed very slowly. The Rangers Club began to admit women as
members with voting rights from March 2007. This reflects a general change in policy among social clubs in the city.

The Dalhousie Institute, Kolkata

The *Dalhousie Institute* (DI) Calcutta was established in 1859 for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the young men of the city by affording them the means of literacy, scientific and social improvement in the shape of a library; lectures, reading rooms and such other resources as might be from time to time devised to foster a spirit of goodwill and sociability among members; to provide amusements; to take part and promote games and to embark upon any activities calculated to benefit the Institute. John Ramfry was the founder of the Institute. It was mainly due to his influence and exertions that the other members were motivated to take up the cause of the welfare of the young men of the city. Raja Satyendra Nath Ghosal of Bhukailash Rajbati at Kidderpore was the earliest native members of the Institute if not a founder member. Apart from him the eminent native members were Baboo Khetar Mohun Chatterjee, Baboo Prosunna Coomer Tagore (Council member in 1865), Manuckjee Rustomjee, Nawab Abdul Latiff, Moonshee Amir Ali, Baboo Manisudhan Roy, W. C. Bonnerjee, N. C. Boral, Prince Mohammad Bukhtyar Shah Rustomjee, Potit Paban Sen and Lall Sirdarjee.

The Institute was not at all a social club during the days of Dr. Norman Chevers, the then Vice President (1865) and President (1873-1875). No drinks were served at the Institute and no ladies were allowed or admitted as members till 1887. The activities of the Institute were confined to arrangements of scientific lectures, musical soirees, musical classes, a gymnasium, dramas, billiards, tennis and reading. The first Anglo-Indian President of the Institute was Mr. King in 1968. No single lady was given membership at the Institute till 2004. None has enrolled yet. Women were allowed to vote only from 2004 and Mrs. Denise Smith is the only female council member from 2004.
Conclusion

The practice of building up its own identity and forming organizations for and of the community started in the early nineteenth century. The practice still continues. The initial objective of forming an organization was to mobilise against British official discrimination and to sustain a communitarian identity. While the original objective is no longer relevant, Anglo-Indians have continued to form new and maintain the old organizations. The Anglo-Indians now feel that they need to improve their position in India and for that the leaders have come forward to take up the cause. CAISS, for example, has been formed with the purpose to improve the condition in which the Anglo-Indians live. The social security mechanism that the community has built up over the years is, on the one hand, very important for the community and, on the other hand, it is a reflection of the ethnic identity that the community has sustained over time. No other known community of mixed descent so far had been so organized in its endeavour to do something to maintain an identity for itself. This has given the community greater resilience in the face of adverse pressures. The history of Anglo-Indian organisations show, however, that their self-image as ‘westernised’ has not kept pace with time. Indeed, one may argue that the ‘western’ culture to which the community prides itself as subscribing is somewhat ossified, somewhat out of touch with the dynamic present of western societies. While in Europe, women have gained considerable social visibility and much greater public participation throughout the twentieth century, especially after the radical phase of the women’s movement in the 1960s, the Anglo-Indians in India have taken much longer to allow women entry in decision-making in the clubs and associations that are so important a part of its life as a community. It is only in the last decade that more progressive gender policies have been adapted.

There remain, however, greater pressures on women to sustain community identity. I visited the CAISS office at Lawrence DeSouza Home on one Sunday morning, the day on which CAISS provides ration to some of the members of the community in need,. I noticed the gender bias in the operations of community welfare. First, mostly women had come to collect the rations and one of the officials confirmed that it is women who
receive most of the help offered by the organization. Though this has not been consciously decided by the organization, they try to help the women and give them the first priority. Second, the women who had come for ration on that day wore dresses to look “more as an Anglo-Indian”. One of the members who had come wearing a sari was denied ration on that day because she did not look like an Anglo-Indian and spoke more in Hindi than in English. The woman insisted that she was an Anglo-Indian. She had apparently come from a densely-populated Muslim area and therefore she felt uneasy to dress up in “an Anglo-Indian way” though she had such dresses at home. All men and women present there stood in silence. I asked one of the women present whether what the woman had said was true. My interlocutor told me that it was true to some extent. Since Anglo-Indians in destitute conditions mostly live in densely-populated Muslim slums, it is difficult for them to wear frocks and dresses. However, this particular woman in sari, she thought, was up to mischief as she was really an Indian Christian who could easily pose as an Anglo-Indian to get the ration for her family. I further pressed my interlocutor on how she identified a non Anglo-Indian. To which she simply answered “we know”. Given the small size of the community, it is perhaps not absurd to assume that an Anglo-Indian would be able to identify and tell a fellow Anglo-Indian from an impostor. But two very important questions remain: First, why were women of the community mostly offered help? Second, why had the organizers considered wearing a sari and speaking in Hindi as markers of a non-Anglo-Indian culture? The answer to the second question was perhaps easier. These are considered markers of non-Anglo-Indian culture within the community. But the answer to the first question was not easy. It is commonsensical that care for women and children attracts better funding and greater sympathy. It could also be that the community considers women more vulnerable and therefore gives them more care and aid. The second answer establishes the patriarchal character of the community which is corroborated by the fact that only recently have the clubs and organizations of the community granted membership and voting rights to women. If the incident at Lawrence DeSouza Home is considered as evidence of the patriarchal pressure faced by Anglo-Indian women from within their community, this will be an example of how Anglo-Indian women are sandwiched between the two worlds of different patriarchal demands—one from inside the community and the other from the outside. Though the
ethnic identity of the community is evident in its formation of organizations, the women of the community are pressurized by two conflicting demands of the patriarchal structure and are pushed further to the margins of the community. This may be the reason why the community helps the women more than it helps the men. In the process, their ethnic identity as an Anglo-Indian gets more emphasized. What they can wear and what they can not becomes very important criterion for being identified as an Anglo-Indian. Such particularities are not stressed in the case of an Anglo-Indian man. He may wear kurtu-pyjama, a lungi, a suit or shirt and trousers. But his identity goes unquestioned. Whether or not he speaks good English does not matter. However, it is he who decides when and where the Anglo-Indian women will be permitted to enter and exercise her rights as a member of the community.