Historical Development of the Anglo-Indian Community

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Abstract

The Anglo-Indian community is a legacy of colonialism. Portuguese, Dutch, French, and—most significantly—British people arrived in India through the development of Western trade and rule in the seventeenth century. Almost solely male endeavours were involved in colonialism. When it came to the Europeans in India, thousands of unmarried men were stationed there for years, and many of them formed relationships with native women. European men formed partnerships with native women in the early days, when the sea voyage was long and risky, and European men were forced to settle down for many years. That practice was later labelled as a necessity. During their time in India, Europeans fulfilled various roles, including priests, traders, conquerors, monarchs, and administrators. In addition, they were accountable for the emergence of a multiracial population that came to be known as the Anglo-Indian community. In the course of their history, the people who are now known as Anglo-Indians have been known by a variety of names, including "Eurasians", "East Indians," "Half-castes," "Mixed Blood," "Country-Borns," and "Indo-Britons."

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The Anglo-Indians have a long and illustrious history that dates back to the very beginnings of European contact with India. After an extended period, some daring and ambitious explorers, motivated by a desire for power, glory, and wealth, left Europe to conquer other countries and establish trade links with them. Following in the footsteps of the Portuguese as the first Europeans to arrive in India via marine route were the Dutch, British, and French. These early European settlers are the root of the Anglo-Indian community.[1] From a historical perspective, members of the community are the offspring of marriages between indigenous Indian women and early explorers and settlers from Europe who made their way to India. They are a multiracial group of people who were either born out of wedlock or as the result of some other kind of social encounter between a European father and an Indian mother.[2] Typically, the only people referred to as "Anglo-Indian" are those whose ancestry can be traced back to these earlier generations' half-castes.[3]

The advent of Portuguese settlers marks the beginning of the natural history of the Anglo-Indian community. It marked the start of a new era in India's history.[4] Vasco de Gama, a valiant Portuguese sailor, arrived in Calicut on India's Malabar Coast in 1498 and established the first direct sea link between Europe and South Asia.[5] The soldiers began to ally with the native women soon after the Portuguese landed. The Portuguese government, however, "sent batches of women to India out of worry about the morals of its personnel in the East to halt this. However, the sending of women-folk, being very costly, could not be continued for long, so the Portuguese government encouraged marriages of their men

with native women."[6] This policy was advocated by the Portuguese authorities, who did so for various reasons. The Portuguese anticipated learning more about themselves, the mostly unexplored subcontinent, and its inhabitants by mingling with the Indian populace. They learned more about and gained an understanding of numerous facets of society, including societal norms, languages, and economics. The Portuguese were able to create beneficial business ties because of this understanding. In addition, because the children of mixed marriages converted to Christianity, the benefit of mixed marriages was religious. These brand-new Christians might be incredibly useful for subsequent missionary activities.

The practice of intermarriage was discussed in depth by King Manoel. He strongly encouraged his officials to wed "fair women of good families" in India.[7] The primary endeavour done by the Portuguese settler Afonso de Albuquerque was a popular representative who came to India. In 1509, Afonso de Albuquerque was appointed governor of Portuguese possessions in India. He wanted to consolidate Portuguese dominance and a stronghold in India economically, socially, militarily, and culturally. For which a considerable Christian population would be needed.[8] Before the end of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese acquired vast territories through military conquests or treaties with native rulers.[9] Soon, many factories sprang up along the western shores; of India from Calicut to Diu.'[10] Albuquerque then turned its attention to converting the forts into colonies and maintaining the royal structure of the Portuguese. A prominent Christian population was needed to control these colonies in India.

He saw that the presence of some Portuguese on the coast to ensure continuity and the fleet's annual journeys could not sustain peace and control in India.[11] As a result, Alfonso de Albuquerque forced his soldiers to marry Indian women to maintain Portuguese power in India.[12] He believes they can gain control of India by instilling compassion in the local population.[13] Albuquerque acted as a colonialist and missionary in India, encouraging his soldiers to marry only the daughters of the land's most powerful men.[14] On the other hand, he permitted marriage only to individuals of recognised character. Albuquerque's intentions were those of a coloniser and a missionary to settle permanently in India. Hence, he gave bribes and dowries to encourage such marriage and encouraged his soldiers to develop professional trades like carpenters, shoemaking, tavern-keeping, tailoring, and allotted lands, houses, and cattle, gave everything they needed to start their life in India.[15] His policy of colonisation had a religious as well as secular aspect.[16]

After settling predominantly in southern India, the Portuguese colonial beachhead spread Portuguese culture and traditions and converted the inhabitants to Catholicism. They accepted interfaith relationships, and their children were typically given generous treatment. Many marriages were done with the mainly 'white and beautiful widows and daughters' of Muslims who had been killed in the battle with the Portuguese in India in 1510.[17] After the fleeing of Indian officers from Goa, they had left their *Harmes* back. Later, *Harmes*[18] was used by the Portuguese[19]. Albuquerque gave the order to gather the women and children of the Turks together, whom they could not take with them because of their defeat. He ordered that they should receive proper attention and be safely kept, and he converted them to Christianity and married them to Portuguese men.[20]

Marriages to indigenous women were encouraged by the authorities because they gave the Portuguese a better understanding of the languages, practices, and customs of the native population, which helped them to create relations with them. Another reason for these marriages with the native women was also religious causes. The Portuguese came to India with a sword and a cross in their hands.[21] They wanted to spread Christianity and consolidate their empire in India. Trade was not the only object for coming to

the East. The planter, soldier, and settlers did not come alone; they came with the missionaries; they were charged with the feeling of the spread of Christianity in the East.

A native girl had to be Holy Baptised by the Church before such weddings to ensure that the Christian population's numerical strength would be maintained.[22] This led to a hybrid community in the Portuguese empire. As a result, the Portuguese used marriage to gain more acceptance for their rule. Due to this, the Anglo-Indian population rapidly expanded between 1497 and 1550 during the Portuguese conquest of India.[23] The children born to these marriages of different racial backgrounds are known as *Luso-Indians*.[24] They were the progeny of these mixed-race marriages between the Portuguese and Indians.[25] They worked in the factories and armouries established by the Portuguese during the Portuguese colonial period. During the Portuguese colonial era, Europeans developed factories and arsenals in the homelands of the Luso-Indian population.

Portuguese settled at Hugli in the mid of sixteenth century.[26] Chittagong and Satgaon were the chief commercial port of Bengal at that time. Hugli was the main centre around 1580, which grew into a substantial town with a population of 5000 by 1603.[27] They erected a fort at Hugli and adopted the same intermarriage policy with native Indian women.[28]

The Portuguese were unable to successfully establish themselves in India on a permanent basis, which resulted in the entry of the Dutch and the British in the early years of the seventeenth century. The Portuguese had to abandon their possessions in India. It was a social and economic disaster for the Portuguese when they were forced to give up their Indian assets. It directly impacted the Luso Indians, who were thrown into a sea of misery and poverty.[29] "The Luso-Indians rapidly began to decline socially, and within a short time, most of them returned to the Indian standard.[30]

But still, the Portuguese failed to establish themselves permanently in India at a top level. A significant reason for the Portuguese defeat was the arrival of the Dutch and British in the early seventeenth century. Aside from this, the Luso-Indians continued to express European qualities and characteristics in major cities like Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay. Many of them eventually merged with the Anglo-Indians, a newly-born mixed community of British descent.[31] Some of the Luso-Indians were taken over by the Dutch and made into their own autonomous organisation. The Dutch were gradually pushed out of the region by the English East India Company in the seventeenth century, at which time they also signed a document claiming responsibility for the Luso-Indians.

The Portuguese were in charge of eastern commerce at the time the Dutch arrived. The arrival of the Dutch in India was a disaster to the Portuguese economy, although their history is not primarily associated with India.[32] The Dutch showed their interest in commercial activities, and the Dutch overthrew the control of the Indian trade by the Portuguese.[33] In 1614, Pulicat featured Anglo-Indians resulting from marriages between Dutch colonial servants and Indian women, which were officially promoted as long as the bonds were permanent and the women were Christians. But the majority of their families migrated to Batavia when the British annexed that settlement.[34]

Unlike the Portuguese, the Dutch allowed their settlers and soldiers to marry European women, which reduced the likelihood of intermarriage significantly. Furthermore, the Dutch were more concerned with securing their positions in the Indonesian Archipelago and Ceylon and did not maintain a permanent foothold in India. However, they established trading posts on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts and Bengal.[35] Another factory appeared at Chinsurah in Bengal, with Eurasian populations noted at all of these stations.[36] Despite their disagreement, they followed the previous pattern of mixed marriages and offered three-month pay to those of their men who wedded locally.[37] However, there were not a significant number

of mixed children of Dutch Eurasians. The Dutch settled in Ceylon and prospered there until the British took control of the island in 1803.[38] The mixed population there, known as *Burghers*, played an important role, but in India, the footing of the Dutch was both slight and precarious. The factories of Dutch never grew into great cities.[39]

The Danes, Prussians, and Flemish were among the other European nations to establish businesses in India. These European immigrants commonly wed Indian women. They also helped the Anglo-Indian community in India to expand. Among these European traders, the French became vital rivals to the British for control of the Indian trade. The former mixed freely with the locals and did not appear to discriminate against the half-castes significantly. By the end of the eighteenth century, there were several Eurasians living in the French towns of Chandernagore and Pondicherry as a result of Joseph Marquis Dupleix's marriage to an Anglo-Indian woman from Chandernagore.[40]

The French in India were relatively indifferent to racial distinctions. Populations of affluent Eurasians emerged over time at Pondicherry and Chandemagore. The French fought several wars in India, and many Frenchmen there were vanguards of noble families and distinguished soldiers of fortune. Many of them sought service with Indian princes such as the Nizam, Tipu Sultan, Scindhia, Holkar, Begum Sumru, and others, raising soldiers and training their armies. Many of them married Indian women from both the Muslim and Hindu communities, resulting in a mixed population that has survived even now to a large extent. The wife of Governor Dupleix at Pondicherry was Eurasian[41], as were an unknown number of French military officers and soldiers, in addition to the hundreds of mercenaries engaged in the struggle for control of South India after 1744. A few notable names may be mentioned Raymond, De Boigne, Perron, Bours, Bernier, Bourguin, Derridon, Drugeon, Dudrenec, Duprat, Flourea, Fremont, La Marzchant Lesllnean, Le Vassoult, Madoc, Claude Martin, Pedron, Pillet, Piron Plumet, Saleur.[42]

On the other hand, the great majority of Eurasians are descended from the English East India Company's factors, troops, and bureaucrats, which explains their desire to be called Anglo-Indians. As soon as the British started getting established in Bengal, the offspring of mixed marriages between Portuguese men and native women migrated to Bengal in the eighteenth century, after the Portuguese had lost their power and influence from the Goa and the Western Coast of India.[43]

This community existed prior to the establishment of British colonial control in India. The British made a significant contribution to the making of the Anglo-Indian community.[44] Their contact with India was both intensive and lasting. They came as traders and adventurers but stayed as conquerors and rulers.[45] The colonial British were not unfamiliar with individuals who had a mix of European and Asian ancestry. There was a diverse population in India prior to the arrival of the British, including a sizable number of Indo-Portuguese.[46]

The offspring of prior partnerships were highly prized servants during the administration of the East India Company, and the British utilised them as interpreters when interacting with Indian traders and kings. It was common practice to take wives from their daughters or the Indian community, either with the approval of the Church or through a secular contract. These wives came from all social classes, including royalty, the wealthy, and higher castes, as well as the poor and the outcasts. At one point, the Company even provided financial incentives for soldiers to marry Indian women.[47] However, the way the Company treated children born from these mixed marriages varied greatly. Some were favoured, while others were neglected. At times, some of them were sent to England for education and prominent positions upon their return, while at other times, they were prevented from leaving India by the Trading Company's

London directors. Their history is marked by a dark line of sadness and tragedy. They faced many difficulties, obstacles, irrational prejudices, and harsh criticisms from Europeans and Indians. [48]

In conclusion, we may state that the union of all European men with Indian women marked the beginning of the Anglo-Indian community. For which the majority of Europeans have made various contributions to the formation of this community. The Anglo-Indian community has had different names from time to time, but as we know, the British ruled India for the longest time. And because of this, a glimpse is also seen in the name of mixed community. The term "Anglo" is generally used to refer to the British, but in the context of the Anglo-Indian community, it refers to a group that was created as a result of European colonial control in India. The Indian Constitution's Article 366(2) defines what, exactly?

"An Anglo Indian means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only". [49]

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41. Jean Albert, born 1708 to a surgeon in the French Trading Company and the Indo- Portuguese Tzabel Roza de Castro. The children of Jean Dupleix married into several Pondicherry colonial families.

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