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Decoding the Anglo-Indian Woman: Discourses on Rape and Victimhood

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Abstract: *The Anglo-Indian community is recognized as a racial and linguistic minority in India. It also is recognized as a marginal community. This community has a history of over five hundred years and is a part of Indian polity with nominated representatives in the state legislatures and Parliament. An incident of rape popularly known as 'Park Street Rape Case' occurred on February 6, 2012 in Kolkata. The survivor an Anglo-Indian woman, Suzette Jordan, later died on 13 March 2015 due to meningitis. The incident created an uproar in the media because the state government had pointed towards the incident as a 'minor case' where the victim was labelled as a prostitute. This paper will highlight how the woman of a marginal community was socially harassed by the state, common people and on the social media from the time of incident and even after her death. It will especially highlight on the after currents on social media after Suzette died a natural death. The paper will use opinions posted on the social media on the issue as the bulk of the data with media reports on print and internet versions. The paper will argue how a woman of a marginal community was a victim to multilayered marginalization in the process.*

Keywords: Anglo-Indian women, Anglo-Indian community, Anglo-Indian community in post-colonial Kolkata, Marginalized communities in India.

Introduction

Men are regarded aggressors and initiators and women are regarded the gate-keepers and limiters in the ritual of sex. It means men are supposed to press for sex and women are supposed to resist. In such a ritual the line

between rape and seduction becomes blurred. Rape is by definition forcing sex on others yet there are some men who report that they have forced or coerced a woman but have not raped her. A woman may also say that she was coerced or forced into sex was not raped (Koss 1988; Lisak and Miller 2002; Kahn et al. 2003). Further there may be a significant number of people who apparently feel that a man is justified in forcing a woman to have sexual intercourse if she had sex with him before (Shotland and Goodstein 1992) or behaved in certain ways such as allowing him to pay for meals and entertainment or 'leading him on' and then changing her mind (Bostwick and DeLucia 1992; Emmers-Sommer and Allen 1999). In a cultural context where men are thought to need and desire sex whereas women are entitled to resist sexual activity unless they have been forceful from the start, the stage is set for a high rate of rapes of women by men (Lips 2015). A good example of radical feminist analysis of rape can be found in the writings of Catherine A. MacKinnon. She argues that in the type of society we live in, sexuality is "a social construct of male power: defined by men, forced on women, and constitutive of the meaning of gender. [...] Male and female are created through the eroticization of dominance and submission. The man/woman difference and the dominance/submission dynamics define each other (MacKinnon 1989: 113). Sexuality is permeated through and through by gender inequality and male dominance of women. This is true not only of some, but of all sex: from "normal" intercourse to prostitution and pornography to sexual harassment and rape.

MacKinnon invites us to compare the reports of rape victims with women's reports of sex and with the way pornography portrays sex, and claims that they all look very much alike. In view of this, it is difficult to sustain the usual distinctions between the normal and the pathological and between violence and sex. And rape must be acknowledged as "indigenous, not exceptional, to women's social condition" (p. 172). MacKinnon rejects the argument that rape is not really about sex but about violence, as it "fails to answer the rather obvious question, if it is violence not sex, why didn't he just hit her?" (p. 134). The truth of the matter is that rape is inherently both. The argument merely "makes it possible for rape to be opposed by those who would save sexuality from the rapists while leaving the sexual fundamentals of male dominance intact" (p. 135). The liberal takes the presence or absence of consent as the difference between legitimate sexual intercourse and rape. That would be quite appropriate, if the social conditions in which a woman gives or refuses consent were those of equality of power and freedom of choice. But the actual condition in which sex is negotiated in our society is not at all like that; the far–reaching gender inequality and

the domination of women by men in all areas of social life vitiate any consent that may be given. Much too often, perhaps even typically, women engage in sex they do not want. They are made to do so in all kinds of ways, ranging from actual violence to various types of explicit or implicit coercion to economic considerations or psychological pressures and needs. MacKinnon's illustrations include having sex "as a means to male approval; male approval translates into nearly all social goods" (p. 147),"acquiescence [to sex], the despairing response to hopelessly unequal odds" (p. 168), coercion "by something other than battery, something like economics, may be even something like love" (MacKinnon 1987: 88), as well as the following: "... We continue to stigmatize the women who claim rape as having experienced a deviant violation and allow the rest of us to go through life feeling violated but thinking we have never been raped, when there were a great many times when we, too, have had sex and did not want it" (pp. 88-89). In view of all this, the very idea of consent is no longer helpful nor, indeed, meaningful. Accordingly, MacKinnon proposes that "rape should be defined as sex by compulsion of which physical force is one form. Lack of consent is redundant and should not be a separate element of the crime" (MacKinnon 1989: 245). However, we are not told just what is to count as compulsion. In view of her examples quoted above, it seems to be a very wide notion – wide enough to imply that whenever a woman has sex with a man that she does not want for its own sake, but engages in it for some extrinsic reason, she is coerced, and therefore also raped. Let us discuss Suzette's case in the light of this argument.

The Incident: Trailing and Now

Suzette Jordan died at a private nursing home for illness on 13 March 2015. She was an ordinary Anglo-Indian woman who could never make to the headlines in regional and national newspapers. She was in the news because she was a survivor. Suzette a mother of two young girls, separated from her husband lived in a single room apartment in Kolkata. On February 6, 2012, she was raped by five men on a moving car at gunpoint. Till a year she was anonymous and referred in the media as the 'Park Street Rape case'– a case that created a furor in the media because of some comments from the ministers and politicians in power. The chief minister called it an orchestrated incident to malign the government. One of her cabinet colleagues and a minister of sports questioned Suzzete's integrity as a woman and a mother visiting a nightclub and staying out of home for late hours. Another woman Member of Parliament of the ruling party said that the

incident was a deal gone askew between the woman and her clients. The then Police Commissioner also commented that this incident was a campaign to malign the police and the government. In contrast to these comments which out rightly questioned why the woman had been so free in choosing what she liked and wanted, Kolkata's first woman joint commissioner of police (crime) said 'something had occurred'. Two days after she cracked the case she and Joint Commissioner of Police (Headquarters) had to rush to the state secretariat to 'clarify' their stand. The Joint Commissioner told media after the meeting that 'Several newspapers have been reporting that I have been working on the case as an individual going against my organization. This is absolutely false. I have been successful only because of my team. This is not my individual success…The investigation is still on and we are yet to arrest more accused persons. But more than the probe, my personal life has become important for the media which I feel very disturbed about. I wanted to clarify this' (IANS, April4, 2012, updated 20:17 IST). She was later transferred to the post of Deputy Inspector General of Police (Training), Barrackpore, considered a garage posting for an Indian Police Service Officer till now entrusted with solving complex crime cases in the metropolis.

On the evening of 9 February after three days of the incident Suzzette went to the Park Street Police station to write a complaint. The policemen laughed at her and asked how she could be sure that it was an act of rape. The station's officer-in-charge pointedly asked what positions the rapists had taken to rape her. As the police men listened to the story they asked each other if they too were going for a drink that night. They laughed and looking lewdly at Suzette said, 'Who knows, we could get lucky tonight.' (*How do you survive being named 'The Park Street Rape Victim'?* by Shriya Mohan, Grist Media- Wednesday, 3, July 2013 viewed on 10 December 2015). Finally, she could register her case after two hours of questioning. On February 10, Suzette got a call from the Park Street police station that she had to get a court order for a medical examination. As there were no doctors available on the date and day after she was asked to come on February 14, eight days after the rape. On February 14, Suzette had to stand naked in front of four women (three doctors and an assistant). They poked and prodded her. She felt 'degraded, deeply humiliated' (Ibid). The doctors after examining her said she was lucky as she was fair and the marks could still be seen after a week. So it was finally proved that there were injury marks to her private body parts. Her rape was officially recognized and registered.

After collecting a copy of the FIR she told her story to a journalist working with a Bengali newspaper. The reactions from the chief minister and members of the ruling party, police commissioner were after reports of it were published. Suzette was saddened by such comments. She said, 'the government blamed me for making the issue political and for all the frenzy it generated…But I never blamed anyone. I just wanted justice…it wasn't just me who suffered…it was my sister, my brother, my dad who were discriminated against because of me.'(Ibid)

On 18 June she decided to join a rally organized by a network of women's rights organization called Maitree to protest the recent incidents of rape. It was the first time that a rape victim would appear in public gathering claiming her identity as a person denied her rights. Suzette said, 'I was sick of being called 'Park Street'. I realized that I can't fight behind a mask. I had to make the point that we have nothing to be ashamed of. Society should be ashamed to make rape victims feel a stigma. Me? The '*Park Street Rape Victim*' (Italics own)? Bullshit! I'm a mother, I'm a daughter, I'm a sister. People depend on me and love me!' (Ibid)

After nine months had passed after Suzzette's death the three accused were sentenced for three years of imprisonment and a fine. In these nine months many incidents, comments surfaced giving this incident a critical movement. This paper is centered on the comments and incidents that led to multiple layered marginalization of the woman concerned rendering a window to the situation in which women of this marginalized community live in the state.

Patriarchy, Marginalization and furthering of the multiple layers

The Anglo-Indian community is a recognized minority in India and a marginal community. The Anglo Indians are "Western" or at least European in their self-proclaimed orientation insofar as the basic features of their culture are concerned. Their mother tongue is English, their religion is Christian, they dress like the Europeans and their family organization, food habit and general lifestyle bear the hallmarks of a "Western" cultural heritage. There is abundant evidence to suggest that they cultivate habits which bear close semblance to British social and cultural life but no substantial evidence to suggest that they share intimately and extensively the cultural life of the Indian people (with the possible exceptions of the Indian Christians with whom they share the common bond of religion and the Parsees and Armenians with whom they share the western way of social living).

Throughout their historical existence in India, they showed indifference towards Indian culture, history, and politics. They made very little effort to understand the religious and philosophical systems of India. There are very few Anglo-Indians who take the trouble to learn an Indian language. In the past they mainly interacted with English-speaking Indians and Europeans. At present they make a reluctant effort to understand and learn the local language because it is mandatory in schools and is sometimes required for jobs. Most Anglo-Indians have limited understanding of Indian art, music, and dance and take no interest in Indian literature. Most of them know less about the legendary personalities of India than about folk heroes of England and Europe. The Anglo-Indians are loath to wear Indian clothes. Members, who do so, often face harsh criticism. However, it should be mentioned that some women adopt the sari for special occasions and for jobs where it is mandatory. Anglo-Indians have a fondness for the Indian curries but they consider eating without cutlery unacceptable. The traditional Indian joint family has never been adopted by the Anglo-Indians who have stuck to the nuclear family as their sole kinship organization. The extended joint Indian family stands in sharp contrast to the more nuclear Anglo-Indian family. The Anglo-Indians completely reject the Hindu caste system. A degree of acculturation has no doubt occurred but the position of the Anglo-Indian community is still best perceived as peripheral to mainstream Indian culture (Gist 1960: 365-7).

Historically, the British rulers had kept the Anglo-Indians at a distance from themselves in matters of social intimacy. The former did not accept Anglo-Indians as marital partners although Anglo-Indian women were accepted in unconventional (non-marital) relationships. There are however a few instances of intermarriage between British men and Anglo-Indian women. This shows that the line of separation drawn was porous allowing undesirable crossings. There are also a few instances where the Anglo-Indians and the British worked together. One can think of the Christian missions and the people they served, of the British teachers in Anglo-Indian schools, and of the church where the pastor did not discriminate amongst his flock.

However, the Anglo-Indians *did* receive to some extent a preferential treatment from the colonial administrators in matters of certain professions and this gave them an economic edge over the other Indians. From this advantageous position they often viewed other Indians as humans of an inferior order (Ibid: 368). They constructed stereotypes of the Indians as dirty, lazy, corrupt, inefficient, backward and superstitious. Such

stereotypical images still prevail. But what is interesting here is that the Anglo-Indians themselves, scorned by the British, remained at the margins of British social life. The British looked down upon the Anglo-Indians who, in contrast, looked up to the British as their beneficiaries. The privileged position of the Anglo-Indians and their protected occupational position was often a source of irritation for other Indians who found it difficult to accept with equanimity what they considered unfair competition from persons whom they had come to regard as aliens. Once the British left, these protected jobs were increasingly opened up to competition. With the complete removal of job security by the 1960s, the Anglo-Indians, so long accustomed to job protection, found it difficult to obtain positions that would enable them to maintain their traditional way of life. Unemployment gradually reared its head and the economic position of the community languished.

In their writings, Anglo-Indian authors often sketch an image of the Anglo-Indian as one who lacks adaptability in post-independence India: this individual can neither give up her/his bias for the British way of life nor merge with the dominant Indian community. Wallace found that "freshness and breadth of vision" to be "almost entirely lacking". The other features according to him "are social inferiority, over-sensitiveness, lack of confidence, independence or industry, precociousness in the young and immaturity in the older members" (1930: 6). Maher considers the essential elements of Anglo-Indian character to be "loyalty, devotion to duty, sportsmanship, generosity, physical courage, and discipline, obedience to authority, hospitality, a love for orderliness and a sense of responsibility concerning work tasks" (Maher 1962: 79-82). Frank Anthony's observations in contrast are about the "extraordinary beauty of Anglo-Indian women, the sporting prowess of the members of the community, their valour in times of military crisis, their contribution in building the colonial infrastructure of India". But he also points out the split psychology of the community, its alleged social exclusiveness and overwhelming community arrogance towards fellow Indians (1969: i-vi). Such wide-ranging sentiments probably provide the necessary counterpoint to the overemphasized stereotypical images described by other non-Anglo-Indian writers (Lahiri 1990).

Like the women of any community and culture, Anglo-Indian women live within the patriarchal structure of their community but what makes them different from others is that they face multiple layers of patriarchal domination: one within their own community and the other from the outer world. In this case, the demands and expectations of the multiple patriarchal structures faced by Anglo-Indian women intersect and overlap at points as

well as have distinct qualities. Thereby, the multiple structures are analytically distinct but in reality may be confronted as a single patriarchal structure by the subject. The women of the community are subject to all the layers of patriarchal domination at the same time and their responses to all these layers are different. For example, they may mutely accept the patriarchal structure of their community on the one hand but, on the other, they may harbour cynical reservations for the patriarchal structures of the outer world (in this case, that of India). All these patriarchies reinforce and reproduce masculinity and gendered power relations where the women may act as agents of patriarchal demands on other women. Let me first consider what the expectations of these multiple structures are among Anglo-Indian women and then take into consideration how they respond to these differing expectations.

The Anglo-Indian community is patrilineal. Though patrilineality does not automatically impose patriarchy, historically the recognition of the mother's contribution was absent in the early period of the community's development. This implies a male bias from the very outset. There are innumerable birth records and baptism records of the Anglo-Indians (then known as Eurasians) which do not show the name of the mother of the child. Scholars have identified these absentee mothers to be of Indian origin whose names were not recognized. Moreover, these Indian mothers were not recognized by their caste members either because they had defied their caste patriarchy and bore children of a *bidharmi* (heretic) and that too of a *feringee* (Eurasian). These women laid the foundation for the community but were derecognized by the same community. In later years, the women born to the community emerged as a subordinated group within the community with low status and stereotypical identity.

The status of the Eurasian or Anglo-Indian women was considered low from the inception of the community. It remained so in comparison to that of the European women who lived in India during the same time. As marriage of British officials with Eurasian women was discouraged from the nineteenth century, any emotional or sexual liaison with European men seldom matured into something of legal standing. So there are innumerable histories of Anglo-Indian men and women who were born out of wedlock as illegitimate children. These children automatically had a status lower to that of the children of legitimate parents from any community in India. There was rampant physical abuse of Eurasian women. In the journals published in the 1870s, wife-beating, female drunkenness, desertion by husband, poverty, squalor and high female mortality were recurrent themes

(Sen 2005). *The Calcutta Review* published between 1860 and 1890 show that the barrack wife (an appellation for a Eurasian wife) remained as a peripheral/ marginal figure in the discourse of colonial rule in India (Ibid). The following excerpt demonstrates the case clearly:

> Despite a fairly large presence, poorer whites (barrack wives, especially) remained more or less peripheral to the discourse of Anglo-India— the obvious reason being that their presence arguably threatened to undermine colonial hierarchies of race and class…Indeed their erasure from the consciousness of the community was so completely effected that in the 1850s Lady Canning could express her naïve ignorance of any "poor people, except very dark half-castes or natives (Ibid).

The above quote of Lady Canning implies two things: first, that the poverty-stricken Eurasian population was marginal; and second, they were identified as natives of India. As such, there was an inherent class bias against these women. The position of the Eurasian woman before this period was no better. *The Calcutta Review* illustrates that the poorer white women (read the Eurasians) who existed in the margins of the society were considered socially inferior to such an extent that they were socially degraded more than the women of the other communities in India. The articles in this journal expressed the fear that these women were devoid of the "self-respect which even native women may feel".[1] The status of the Eurasian women compared to that of native women was such that the former were treated and identified as nothing more than concubines. Moreover, child marriage was a frequent practice as well among Eurasians. Young girls were married off to much older men. This was followed by early motherhood. *The Calcutta Review* illustrates the story of a 14-year-old girl who was frequently beaten by her old husband because she played marbles with boys of her age (Sen 2005). The following excerpt also illustrates the pitiful condition of Eurasian women in the late nineteenth century India.

> …indeed in 1871 The Friend of India admitted to such a replication of the 'native' practice of 'child marriage' among the poorer whites and went on to locate it as deep-rooted class problem that was prevalent even among the working classes in metropolitan England: "There is the same difficulty in Manchester and our manufacturing towns generally. Poor little lassies, mere children, are commonly enough mothers" (Ibid).

The nineteenth century brought about distinct changes in the way the community bestowed low status on its women. In the nineteenth century, especially after the Suez Canal opened, English ships brought regular cargoes of venturesome beauties bent on matrimony, growing into a social phenomenon called the "Fishing Fleet" (Neville 2004: 27). The captain of the ship and other well-known ladies arranged parties where the candidates would sit as if they were on exhibition and the eligible bachelors would rush there to try their luck (Ibid). "In such situations some Anglo-Indian girls were accomplished flirts. As long as the girl made a suitable catch in the end, flirting was accepted as a pleasant activity except when the girl overdid it" (Ibid: 29). In the nineteenth century, then, the Anglo-Indian women were considered nothing better than "wives and mothers". The way Anglo-Indian women were depicted in the nineteenth century and afterwards bear testimony to the fact that the women were considered no more than commodity within the community: objects to be seen and appreciated. Moorhouse describes Anglo-Indian women not only as the saddest result of British imperialism but also, and paradoxically, as very good-looking – "as though the chemical processes of assorted generations had compensated the outcaste by gradually purging her line of all coarseness until total refinement was reached (Moorhouse 1983: 189)." Hyam also identifies Anglo-Indian women as outstandingly beautiful (Hyam 1990: 16-17)). Many Anglo-Indian writers, especially Frank Anthony, have expended quite a number of lines on the beauty of Anglo-Indian women. Anthony, for example, not only praised Anglo-Indian beauties but also condemned "penny shovelling exercises in near pornography that sexualize them" (Anthony 1969: ii-iii & xi). The recognition of their beauty carried no parallel respect for their personhood. The Anglo-Indian women were considered "wax dolls without a mind" but capable nevertheless of "looking frighteningly unhappy or demons driven by heady but volatile essence of sensuality with no body" (Chaudhari 1965: 260-61). Such identities were imposed upon the Anglo-Indian women by the men of their community. This shows the patriarchal nature of the community, which commoditised the women as mindless beauties who had brought shame to the community. Such stereotypes continue to exist for the Anglo-Indian women. The men and women of the community alike still consider the beauty of Anglo-Indian girls to be their boon and bane.

My fieldwork (Sen 2017) among the women of the community resulted two related observations. When I introduced myself to the men of the community as a researcher on Anglo-Indian women, most of them thought it to be a trivial project. To them, these women had no minds. When I

approached the women to discuss "their issues", they were unwilling to do so. They thought their brothers, husbands or fathers were better equipped to discuss *their* matters since they knew so little. So, the women did not think they could answer the questions on their own. They relied on the male members who had already anticipated such incapability on the part of the Anglo-Indian women. The patriarchy of their community identifies women as objects, as bodies without minds. As "wax dolls" their opinions were worthless not only to the men of the community but also to the women themselves.

The arrival of the British women in India marked a change in the relations and the context in which the community lived. The presence of the British wives and mothers in India— known as *memsahibs*— had provoked racial antagonism between the rulers and the ruled. The reference group for the Anglo-Indian women was these European women. Yet, it was these British women who acted as the chief agents for the imposition of the British imperial-patriarchal domination on the Anglo-Indian women. For example, during the years of the mutiny, the conflict was the most severe on the domestic front (Blunt 2005: 26). The women of the community were not dishonoured but were made to feel their servitude (Kaye 1876: 354).

Unlike the Indian Christians, the European ancestry of the Anglo-Indian community led to an emphasis on some cultural markers, such as language, dress and eating habits. Middle-class Anglo-Indian women employed Indian cooks and servants and had their meals on tables and with cutlery rather than with their hands, much in the fashion of the British *memsahibs*. Though the Anglo-Indian cuisine was different from the English, the Anglo-Indians were always specific to point out that their way of cooking and dining was clearly distinct from the Indian. Though the Anglo-Indian homes were of a lower status and poorer than the British elite in India, their upbringing and lifestyle reflected a masculine middle-class imperial heritage aligned to the British rather than to Indian norms of domesticity (Gaikwad 1967: 15). This represents a clear inclination towards the powerful paternal ancestry and a disregard for an Indian maternal ancestry. The imperialist domination was never a burden for the Anglo-Indians because the community always hoped that they would be eventually recognized by the British as one of them. In contrast, they were antagonistic to the Indians. One of the excerpts from the response of an Anglo-Indian subject in Gaikwad's research on the community reveals that the greatest pride of the Anglo-Indian resides in the fact that they were descendants of Europeans and that there is nothing that the Anglo-Indian deplores more than his dark skin. An Anglo-Indian would give everything in the world to marry his daughter off to

some lowly, despicable European who would ill-treat her perpetually than marry her to a fellow Anglo-Indian. The respondent of the study also expressed his great disdain for the Indians whom the community treats with contempt (Gaikwad 1967). Such outbursts show that they experienced the entire gamut of social pressures - to be a British in the eyes of the British, to be an Indian to be able to live in India and also to be an Anglo-Indian - but they responded to these sets of expectations differently.

The women had accepted the patriarchal domination of their community as well as the British patriarchal domination, but had cynical reservations against Indian patriarchy. Perhaps this adulatory attitude towards British life and the completely opposite attitude towards Indian men and women made Anglo-Indian girls seek a better status by marrying European men and becoming a "lady" in the eyes of others. For example, it was (and is) common that Anglo-Indian women suddenly changed when an Englishman took notice of her. She forgot that her parents were dark-skinned. Instantly India became this horrid place and Indians the most ill-mannered, untrustworthy and dirty people on earth (Hicks 1940). Hicks comments that for the Englishman the Anglo-Indian girl is prepared to sacrifice "everything" and in this way she invokes a spectre of interracial sex and illegitimacy. She is then perceived as more licentious than other European and Indian women (Blunt 2005: 69). This popularly held image of the debauch Anglo-Indian girl is discussed in Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt's article on self-images of the Anglo-Indian community where she comments on the "stereotypical image of lax morality of Anglo-Indian women" in the minds of the Indians (1992-93: 223). On the one hand, the Anglo-Indian girl she portrays strives to forge a link with the British rulers by imitating whatever the latter did. On the other hand, she actively distanced herself from the native (Indian) culture to prove that her ways of life and standards were not only different but also distinct from the other Indian women. The attempts at distancing themselves from Indian social mores, nationalist patriarchy, or to be more precise, the ideology of nationalist domesticity had an impact on the daily lives and social arrangements of Anglo-Indian women. Alison Blunt points out, "Anglo-Indian women and homes were positioned within wider discourses of *both* imperial *and* nationalist domesticity." She argues that in case of these women, their roles as home-makers were "both manifested and erased by their dual identification with Britain as fatherland and India as motherland (Blunt 2005: 24)."

Indian patriarchy deplores the social habits of the Anglo-Indian girls and the 'freedom' they enjoy. Anglo-Indian girl like to dance, go to balls, use

cosmetics, wear European clothes— none of which conform to Hindu or Mulsim society's notion of becoming feminine modesty and propriety. Let me consider some cases. In the film 'Mahanagar' by Satyajit Ray, the heroine— a middle class Bengali wife from a joint family— joins a company as a salesgirl and befriends an Anglo-Indian colleague. This girl had also come to work to sustain her family as had the Bengali woman. But what distinguished her were a lipstick and a sunglass that she carried in her purse. The Anglo-Indian girl offers her lipstick to the Bengali protagonist and it occurs to the latter that putting on the lipstick would help her impress her customers. The interesting part is that the Bengali wife removes her make-up before she enters home. This shows the difference between the Bengali middleclass sensibility about costumes and makeup in the late 1960s and that of the Anglo-Indians.

The Anglo-Indian women projected themselves as more emancipated and westernized than their Bengali counterparts not only in the way they dressed but also as working girls. From the nineteenth century, the Anglo-Indian women worked outside home. Most of the women were educated and had technical training. During the Second World War, many Anglo-Indian women served as members of the Women's Auxiliary Corps (India) {henceforth WAC (I)} and featured prominently in promotional photographs of the W. A. C. (I) (Blunt 2005: 60-62). Frank Anthony noted that the contribution of Anglo-Indian women in the War was more than all the women of all communities in India put together (Anthony 1946: 4). The Anglo-Indian women of pre-independence India were employed as secretaries, typists, clerks, and teachers long before the Bengali middleclass women dared to take a similar step. This contrast made the Anglo-Indian woman more visible in public. Their struggle to sustain life had begun much earlier and this was against the Bengali middleclass patriarchal norm.

The word "tash" often used as slang for Indian Christians and especially Anglo-Indians is another example of the disdain other Indians have for Anglo-Indian women. This word has a deeper connotation in Bengali language with reference to Sukumar Roy's notion of a cow who was a "tash". It cynically symbolized how Anglo-Indians, though born and brought up in India, looked up appreciatively to anything that was European. Instead of eating grass as cows usually do, the *tashgoru* craved for candles and soups made of soap water. The cow is a Eurasian clerk in ill-fitting western clothes who is represented as having a weak constitution and as a possessor of low class values and an easy virtue (Ibid: 39, 125, 150-51). Since it was the Anglo-Indian woman who served predominantly as a clerk, the poem

goes to show how Anglo-Indian women were (and still are) imagined as low class and unacceptable in public. They were despised by the Indian society which upheld the moral virtues of *satitva* (chastity) and *matritva* (motherhood) and celebrated the ethicized femininity of the *pativrata* (devoted wife) and *sati-savitri* (a chaste wife of mythological sanctity). The Bengali middle class of the time was full of anxieties about imminent westernization of the woman and the domestic sphere. The ideal woman of the Bengali middleclass household was therefore in sharp and direct contrast to the already westernized Anglo-Indian woman. The Anglo-Indian women also responded to the dominant societal stereotyping. For example, Isolde, an Anglo-Indian girl in Laura Roychowdhury's book 'The Jadu House', expresses her pain for being an Anglo-Indian. She felt that the actress (who played the role of an Anglo-Indian unwed mother in the Hindi film 'Julie') could not get work after this film because she played an Anglo-Indian girl on screen and candidly performed the role of an unmarried mother. She could not escape the scandal of illegitimate motherhood and Isolde thought, that as Anglo-Indian girls, they had to suffer shame as well (Ibid: 48).

The Bengali middle-class women before independence seldom ventured out unless forced by financial crisis or, in rare cases, when they were educated and desired independence. Though the situation at present has changed for the Bengali women, it has remained quite the same for the Anglo-Indian women. They are still yoked to the responsibility of the family and are not free to follow their own goals. Moreover, the presence of the Anglo-Indian girl in the public domain was anathema to the Bengali middle class conservative sensibilities right until the twentieth century. The two incompatible modes of social orientation deepened the difference between the Bengali and the Anglo-Indian woman. The dual patriarchy of Hindu Brahminical provenance on the one hand and of Anglo-Indian provenance on the other bore down on the Anglo-Indian women simultaneously. The Brahminical patriarchy of the Hindu-Bengali kind eschewed everything *mlechha* (European) or which did not conform to Hindu prescriptions. Therefore, the Europeanized Anglo-Indian lifestyle and especially the way the women of the community behaved were against the patriarchal norm of the Hindus.

Moreover, the pro-British role of the Anglo-Indians in British India also fuelled a deep antagonism against the community. This feeling was (and is) so deep that the Bengali middle class (still) harbours hostile sentiments in expressions such as 'tash' and 'feringhee'. The Anglo-Indians retaliate by

using slangs such as 'bong' for Bengalis. They feel that there is a deep prejudice against the Anglo-Indian girl in the Bengali mind. That is why Bengali families are loath to accept Anglo-Indian girls as wives. They also think that it is due to such parochial and scornful attitude of the Bengalis towards them, that the Anglo-Indians have become so inward-looking and insular. My fieldwork data (Sen 2017) also suggest that Anglo-Indian men are more open to intercommunity marriages than Anglo-Indian women. Perhaps this corroborates the idea that Anglo-Indian women in particular were forced to draw more distinct boundaries of 'we' and 'they' to ward off the patriarchal domination of the Indian society.

This is not to suggest that only Anglo-Indian men have cultural features distinct from that of their women. The Anglo-Indian women are distinct from the women of other communities in India in their dress, language, employment status, and other cultural markers such as their affinity towards their schools, etc. But what make them distinct from the men of the community are the multiple patriarchies they face. However, the quantum of Hindu aggression faced by the Anglo-Indian women is not necessarily greater than that faced by the Anglo-Indian men. What is crucial here is the depiction of how Anglo-Indian women have been subjugated to multiple layers of patriarchal domination within their community. She faces the non-Anglo-Indian man as a male with his universal masculine expectations and additionally as a member of a different community expressing a set of patriarchal expectations different from that of her own community. These women are already marginal as members of an ethnic minority group, the Anglo-Indians. Yet, their subjection to the multiple patriarchies marginalises them further even within their own community, that is, they are a minority among the minority group of Anglo-Indians. They are doubly marginal, doubly *minoritised*. Their response to the society is framed within this multiple-patriarchal setup.

Suzette, Patriarchy, Marginality and Comments after Death

In the social media after her death there was a furor. Many Anglo-Indian men and few women of the community started to exchange their views on the incident after three years the incident had taken place and after Suzzette had died.[2] There was no such upsurge among the members of the community when the incident took place and during the phase when Suzzette was struggling to fight for her rights. This shows how escapist the members of the community are. The men like Michael Robertson, Asley Tyronne Ridge-

Cook were compassionate of the case but women started to voice their unease much late and ended their concern by thanking the men for being compassionate. It was only one man, Max Galstaun who sided with Suzzette in her journey for seeking justice (self-proclaimed in various posts). These men were silent when the incident took place and there were no official declaration of support or criticism of the government or the parties involved from the All India Anglo-Indian Association (the President-in-chief from Kolkata), the official mouthpiece of the community; nor from any non-government voluntary organizations working for the members of the community. Everyone understood the incident had political, cultural and social dimensions but all highlighted that the episode as another incident where an Anglo-Indian woman was at the centre. There were few to voice their concerns and take a decision to take a side. The marginal character of the community were expressed in its vulnerabilities, their fearfulness, lack of forthrightness that is in their self-restraint to voice a concern. Even there were no voice to express unease at the situation from the Christian *bethren* in the city. The Christians who comprise only 2.3 percent of the Indian population of which the Anglo-Indian are only five percent, always feel prejudiced of their minority status in society. It is true that there have been incidents of violence against the members of the minority community but is it not by default that an Anglo-Indian woman was victim in the incident?[5] It could have been any woman in her place! She was never considered by any Anglo-Indian commentators to be an Indian citizen or a woman. Rather her identity that they highlighted was that of an Anglo-Indian woman. This labeling of the incident emphasizes the prejudiced *minoritized* self-understanding status-consciousness of the members of the community. Even if there are no reason or statistics to believe that there have been such incidents very often in the city of Kolkata with women of the community still the community-sentiment was strong while decoding the incident in social media. This shows their vulnerability which was not reflected in Suzzette's way of seeking justice. She had come out to disclose her identity and never used her Anglo-Indian status to claim her victimhood rather she sought her rights as a citizen and a woman. She fought for justice on her own will. She had the agency to question her victimhood and reclaimed her identity from an anonymous rape victim to a woman with an identity. If we consider a comparison between Nirbhaya[3] and Suzzette, both gang rape victims in the same year we might find a strange dimension to it. While Nirbhaya was transformed into a larger than life icon who died defending her honour (if we can call it so!), Suzette was criticized, humiliated in various comments made in the public. Flavia Agnes[4]

writes that while Nirbhaya is an incident that can be referred to and Suzette cannot is because Suzzette chose to disclose her identity and tell her story of violence against her. She points to our patriarchal culture which despises survivors and honour-victims. 'The same old stereotypes get whipped up time and again. The good and the bad, the dividing lines are clearly drawn…In order to deserve our support, the victims must be without a blotch. They must die defending their honour. They must be larger than life, so we can honour and venerate them. We hate those who survive to tell their tales of violations' (Ibid). Patriarchy thus thrives and continues to label who should be revered and who should not, be it an Anglo-Indian or a Dalit or a high caste: women continue to be victims of force, oppression and brutality.

Notes

1. *The Calcutta Review*, Nos. 4-7, 1845.
2. All the comments are posted on the Facebook pages of eminent Anglo-Indians, domiciled and of the Diaspora.
3. The name given for anonymity to 2012 Delhi gang rape and murder case involved a rape and fatal assault that that occurred on 16 December 2012 in Munirka, a neighbourhood in South Delhi. The incident took place when Jyoti Singh, a 23-year-old female physiotherapy intern, was beaten, gang-raped, and tortured in a private bus in which she was travelling with her male friend.
4. https://www.cpiml.net/liberation/2015/04/why-india-loves-nirbhaya-hates-suzette (retrieved on 13 March 2021 at 17 hours).
5. The Christian minority community unleashed an angry voice only when the gang rape of the nun of the Syro-Malankara Catholic clan took place in 2015. We heard a strong voice of protest only after repeated cases against the community.

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