Anglo-Indian Community in Darjeeling Hills: Study of the Growth of Educational Institutions (1835-1900)

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[Editorial Note: The present paper talks about the Anglo-Indian community of the Darjeeling Hills, their rich history as European settlers in Bengal, the study of the growth of educational institutions that were established for their children and why was Darjeeling chosen as the place for establishing such institutions.]

Abstract: *The Anglo-Indian community is among the minority communities recognized by the Indian constitution. This mixed-race community has a rich history of nearly 500 years. The history of the Anglo-Indian community begins from the first European settlement in Bengal. The community found a new home in Darjeeling after this region was acquired by the British. This paper aims to find out a vivid picture of the Anglo-Indian community in Darjeeling and makes a study of the educational institutions that were established for the European and Anglo-Indian children. This paper also aims to find out why Darjeeling was chosen for establishing institutions such as schools and orphanages for European and Anglo-Indian children. This paper also looks into the active role and involvement of the Christian Missionaries for all-around development of Anglo-Indians. Missionaries also played an important role in establishing Girl's schools.*

Keywords: *Anglo-Indian, European, mixed-race, missionaries, education*

Introduction

India is considered an actual lenient mixing bowl of races and cultures. The geographical setting of the Indian sub-continent and its course of happenings have brought persons with different ethnic origins and varying cultural stresses. One of the very significant legacies of colonial India was the birth of a community of mixed racial and cultural legacy i.e. the Anglo-Indian community. The Anglo-Indians, although historically microscopic as an interesting cluster in modern India, have long been regarded as a distinct community that still survives as one of the minority communities in India. The community's '*native*' status was established in 1911 during British rule along with its name, 'Anglo-Indian'. Although called by numerous connotations the community was acknowledged as a minority in Independent India.

Anglo-Indian Origin

The beginning of the Anglo-Indian community traces back to the eighteenth century in Bengal. This minority community nurtures a rich cultural heritage all through the colonial period of India. The Anglo-Indians were commonly called with a variety of connotations such as *half-caste, half-breed, chichi, firringes, Eurasians*. In the initial years when the Europeans with their ships came as merchants and traders in the Indian subcontinent, fostered no desire to settle down here. They had their central objective to institute a commercial relationship with India. Historically till the first half of the seventeenth century the association between the British and the indigenous population was essentially professional or rather professionally reciprocal. Several British officers, armed forces, and citizens as well as many other men under the service of the European Companies and later the British India government, came to establish trade relations with them or search for employment in various subsidiary sections eventually resulting in personal connections with Indian women (Caplan 2001: 61-62). The feelings of settling down in India came only after when the English merchants and traders became the emperors of India. Few of the Anglo-Indian authors and novelists have tried to stress upon East India Company's deliberate policy of openly inspiring inter-community marriages, especially among their employees and local Indian women, leading to the birth of the Anglo-Indian community (Anthony 1969). On the other side, few of the scholarly works have advocated that Christian missionaries were much influential in encouraging matrimonial acquaintances among the Indians and Europeans (Caplan 2001) Apart from these two theories, the western historians were of the opinion that majority of such unions can be regarded as the less-recognized ones especially that happened during the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. In this linking, it is recognised to the fact and cited that every so often for extensively during this retro, European women were deprived of to access the colonies and for that reason, most of the European men could not in any circumstance come across the expense of to marry the European women who however could succeed to reach the subcontinent (Ghosh 2001 Reprint: Stoler 1989). And repetitively it was noticed that married European men were often omitted from employment in colonial government and trade which also is underwritten the European femininity disparity and encouraged associations and unions with local women (Stoler 1989; 134-161). Whatsoever the whys and wherefores it can be believed that in India and as in several regions of the colonial domain where European men found themselves sexually quarantined the native mistress became a *recognized institution*(Dodwell 1926). Many of these women would probably be described as *concubines* (Caplan 2001).

Up to the second half of the eighteenth century, the mixed-race community was identified with the English and that was the reason that this group had not suffered any disabilities. If their fathers could afford to send them to England they had been sent for schooling and had usually resumed to India in the company services. Those who could not advance to England were educated locally and engaged in the great mainstream positions in the non-covenanted civil services, and Company's army (Gaikwad 1967). The prosperity of the Anglo-Indians extended roughly till 1785 as three repressive guidelines were passed against the community, the most important was the 1795's which specified that all personnel not descended from European parents on both sides were declared debarred for service in the army except as fifers, drummers, bandsmen, and farriers. Being a mixed-race community they suffered socially and economically. Debarred from seeking employment with the company, the Anglo-Indians turned to the Princely states. Here many joined the princely state armies as a trainer for the state armies using their skills and talents (Abel 1988). The condition became worse with the enactment of the Charter Act of 1833 where all posts were made exposed to the public of any race in India. They started a competition between the Indians for job opportunities (Sen 2017).

Soon the situation changed with the introduction of modern means of communication in India, they could manage jobs in the emerging new sectors such as railways, telegraphs, and customs. The shift in the occupation yet again put them in the good books of the British. Despite all these the community was affected financially. A quicker inquiry seems to direct that numerous reasons accumulated together to produce the negative approaches towards the mixed racial community. The Anglo-Indian community started to appear in the Social scenario of Bengal from the beginning of 2nd half of the eighteenth century. Being a mixed racial community they also faced problems in the social and economic spheres of life. The community notwithstanding all the negligence were able to grow in digit, influence, and affluence with the knowledge of English. This minority community of British legacy received a helping hand for their prosperity and survival from the Christian missionaries and private endeavours. The alteration of the profession made the Anglo-Indians to travel in the suburbs of Assam and Darjeeling.

Sir Henry Gidney, the leader of the Anglo-Indian Community through his chairmanship of the All India Anglo-Indian Association pursued a new line in that he fought for Anglo-Indians on the grounds that they were natives of India and therefore their rights were fundamental. The Government of India Act following upon the Montague Chelmsford Reforms became operative in 1921, and in that Act the community gained some recognition and protection as an Indian minority group. After the Irwin Pact, the next important date was 1935, when in the new Government of India Act the community were safeguarded and the description 'Anglo-Indian' was legally defined. Sir Henry Gidney's contest for the privileges of the Anglo-Indian community was to have far-reaching results in 1947 when India gained her Independence (Minto 1974: 129)

Anglo-Indians in Darjeeling

The District of Darjeeling comprises the four Subdivisions - Sadar, Kurseong, Kalimpong, and Siliguri. The first three are in the mountainous regions, whereas the last one Siliguri, meaning the stony plain, is in the deadly Terai region of Bengal. It lies between 26"-53' and 27"-13' north latitude and between 87"-59' and 80"-53' East longitudes. Its area is 1,164 square miles, of which an area of 445 square miles is under reserved forest. It may be of interest here to note that the province of Bengal, of which Darjeeling is one of the districts, covers 82,277 square miles (Bhanja 1993).

The history of the Anglo-Indian community in Darjeeling begins with the coming of the Europeans as settlers and tea planters. The history of tea in Darjeeling, however, began in 1841 when seeds and plants of tea were for the first time imported into the district from China. This industry in Darjeeling owes its inception to Dr. Campbell, the first Superintendent of the district. Union of these Europeans with the local women and tea garden women labourers gave birth to the first peer group of Anglo-Indians formally called Eurasians. This new-born community was disliked by the native people and the European tea planters. The newly evolved mixed racial community of European fathers and Indian mothers had to face social problems such as identity crisis and had gone through economic sufferings too. In the approaching years, the community's search for a suitable dwelling place began and found Darjeeling as such. Despite all the suffering soon the Darjeeling hill became the home for the Anglo-Indians. The connection between the Darjeeling hills and the Anglo-Indian community built up with tea plantation, education, and migration (Mondal 2019).

The scenario soon changed with the changing policies of the Colonial government in the Education sector. Darjeeling hills witnessed the construction of educational institutes and orphanages for the European and Anglo-Indian children which helped the community to enrich themselves to fight for their rights, popularise their voice, recognize themselves as Indians and prepared to migrate in other British colonies for obtaining professions.

Anglo-Indians and Educational Institutions

The Charter Act of 1813 had given the freedom to Christian Missionary societies to penetrate in India mainly from the United Kingdom. But the Charter Act of 1833 allowed missionaries from other parts of Europe and America as well. Lord Lytton, the viceroy, was the first to realize that it was negligent to allow wandering children on the street and there was an urgent need to make adequate arrangements for the developed future of these children. In 1833 the Bengal Code for European Schools was compiled which would be applicable to major provinces of British India, namely Bengal, United Provinces, Punjab, and Central Provinces. This was perhaps the first organized effort on the part of the British to look into the education of Europeans and that of the mixed-blood community in India. This effort was followed by grants to the schools as well as provision for technical and industrial training to these children to earn a livelihood in the future.

European schools in India, although included in the general system of public instruction, form a class by themselves. They owe their origin partly to the need of the European and Anglo-Indian community domiciled in India for schools in which the teaching is conducted throughout in English, partly to the desire of the community to maintain a distinctively European character in the instruction and training given to their children. These schools, though controlled by provincial governments, have many common ties. They are governed by a single all-India code of regulations whereas the provincial governments were given liberty to modify this code to suit local circumstances and have in fact introduced a number of local modifications, but in their essential features European schools are not subject to the provincial variations which affect Indian schools. Most of them prepared their pupils for a single series of public examinations to compete with the Cambridge Locals as many of them were from the hill schools in particular. These schools and the institutions had to draw their pupils from different parts of India sometimes remotest (Richley 1923: 191).

The hill tracts of Darjeeling forming a part of the British dominion acknowledged some German missionaries in 1835. It was these missionaries who had brought light of Christianity and western education in these hills. Rev. William Start was the first person to arrive here followed by a group of German missions. Sir Joseph Hooker wrote in his *Himalayan Journals* in 1854 mentioned that "children's faces afford as good an index as any to the healthfulness of a climate, and in no part of the world is there a more active, rosy, and bright young community than at Darjeeling" (Hooker 1891). Darjeeling had a most agreeable climate, particularly suited to Europeans, and climate for growing children were referred to, and it was only a natural sequence that this desirable hill-station should contain some very fine educational institutions, specially equipped for the instruction of - the sons and daughters of Europeans and Anglo-Indians. The bracing mountain air which brings the glow of health to the cheeks, and the rapid means of travel that place the station within easy distance of Calcutta, are advantages that are appreciated by parents in the plains, and cannot be overrated' (Newman Guide 1900). With the exception of the German Moravian missionaries all the other missions were interested in the education of the Domiciled European children and Anglo-Indians rather than educating the native children (Avery 1878).

European schools can mainly be categorized into three sections. The most attractive ones were the hill schools situated at centres of hill stations such as Simla, Murree, Mussoorie, Darjeeling and in the Nilgiris. Secondly, the schools in the plains mainly concentrated in or nearby commercial or administrative centres and third was the European schools of plains in railway junctions where a small population of European concentration was seen. Every European parent in the interests of his children's health, and education sends them to a temperate climate if he can afford to do so. In that case they preferred the hill schools. Most of the hill schools on those days had boarding accommodations. On the other hand the more well-to-do European officials would send their children to England for education (Richley 1923: 194). The reason for which these hill stations became the place of fascination for the Europeans was because of the remoteness. These enclaves preserved a seamless stability between the public and the private compasses where a sense of community was continued. Many more other causes were outnumbered by women and children in hilly terrains in contrast with the demographic pattern of the European population in the plains.

The Christian missionaries seemed to be concerned in the edification of the domiciled European and Anglo-Indian children rather than the native children of the hill region of Darjeeling. As the natives of the hill tract of Darjeeling were not geared up to receive the formal education in the European line. Since the climate of the Darjeeling hills was so admirable for the domiciled European and Anglo-Indian children the missionaries desired that this hill station should encompass a very adequate and well-equipped educational institute for these children. The aim of these educational institutions was to provide the domiciled European and Anglo-Indian children the type of tutelage and education to which the paternities were familiar. These were the children of the government servants who could not meet the expense of sending their children to their native land. These institutes were mainly designed and retained by the missionaries for those offspring alone.

In this regard, the place of esteem was easily secured by the Loreto Convent in 1846. The convent founded was mainly for girls and was accomplished by the Loreto Nuns of Rathfarnham, Dublin by one of the Irish ladies who laboured in the spread of education in this hill tract, Mother M. Teresa Mons. It is a milestone in the education of Anglo-Indians in the Darjeeling district. Loreto Convent was the first institute that paved the way for the Education of Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians on the breezy hills of Darjeeling hills. (Dozey, 1922: 108) The convent was funded by William Moran and T. R. Lounghnan ICS and the district judge of Darjeeling. The idea of starting a school in the hills of Darjeeling for girls first occurred to Archibishop Carew which was brought in his notice by R.Loughnan, a retired senior civil servant of Patna (Chakrabarty 1988). The first Catholic mission institute began its journey with just five pupils (Dozey, 1922: 108). The opening of Loreto Convent in Darjeeling coincided with the missionary efforts of the Roman Catholic Church. These efforts were closely connected with the establishment of schools for the Europeans and Anglo-Indians (Dash 1947). The system of education in the Girl's school was the same as that of Calcutta Loreto House. Along with formal education, girls were trained in needlework too. The Loreto nuns also established a boy's school and an orphanage for the orphans from tea-gardens and soldier’s children in 1868. The Loreto orphanage had a short existence as the orphans were totally shifted to Calcutta (Colmile). Though work among the poor and indigenous population was not totally neglected the main work of the mission was directed to the educational needs of the European and Anglo-Indian children of the sophisticated earning group (Chakrabarty 1988). Although the Convent had to face a few difficulties, mainly from the Protestants, the convent took long strides ahead to weave a glorious future. The convent became one of the most outstanding schools in the hills of Bengal and increased its popularity

(Chakrabarty 1988). The students from the European and Anglo-Indian community of Loreto Convent were successful in the middle scholarship and primary scholarship examinations. After two years in 1848, another school was established in the hills of Darjeeling district was the St. Gregory's Institute by the Italian Capuchins in 1848. The school was built for the domiciled European and Anglo-Indian boys by the Catholic mission. The school was named St. Gregory's Seminary but it was unfortunately closed in 1850. In this regard, the Herald of Calcutta announced in 1850 that the classes were suspended due to unintended situations (Dewan 1991 :90).

Another remarkable institution of such esteem was St. Paul's School. It is one of the oldest schools of its type in India and the second oldest in Bengal (Birney Notes). The school was established in 1846 with the initiative of a prominent Anglo-Indian leader, John William Ricketts to meet the needs of the Anglo-Indian population in Calcutta. (Vol. XIV-307) Mr. Ricketts was the first honorary secretary, founder of the school. Later Dr. George Smith became the principal of the school, he was well known for his works. He was the editor of *Friend of India* and biographer of Cary, Henry Martyn, Duff (Vol. XIV-307). In 1863, the school was in hitches and Bishop Cotton raised funds by private entrepreneur and government donations and decided to move the school to Darjeeling. St. Paul's was also intended for the pupils of the well to do class and followed the same course as prescribed by the Cambridge University Local Examination Syndicate along with religious teaching upon the philosophies of the Church of England. Though the company paid great attention to the education of the growing British population, nothing was for this mixed community at the beginning. With regard to education for European children, the first notable movement began as early as 1863 when the institution known as St. Paul's School was opened in Darjeeling. The school was hung around by the children of government employees such as the officers, clerks, tea-planters and railway health workers. The school was established mainly to educate the sons of the Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians on the line of a public school system at a reasonable charge, as it was in the United Kingdom. Although initially it had not served any purpose for the native children, later it took step forward to build institutes for the Lepcha and Bhutia children in the missionary line (Dewan 1991: 93).

The hills of Kurseong of Darjeeling district witnessed another educational institution established for the Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians in 1879 was the Victoria Boys. The Boys' School, which is located at an altitude of above 6,000 feet from sea-level on an estate covering an area of 100 acres of land, established in 1879. Several constructions were made to the main building to cope with the ever increasing demands for admission until the current year when the number of students on its rolls stands at 190. The course of studies of the school at the beginning was worked upon the Junior Cambridge curriculum and was raised to the Senior Cambridge. Students after passing the Junior Cambridge Certificate Examination were put in a further two years for the Technical branches which include Mechanical, Electrical and Mining Courses. The school was established to serve the children of railway employees and government servants of all ranks. The fees structure of the students varied as the records say the children of non-officials had to pay a higher amount of fees. Initially as a co-educational school it started the journey, which ended in the year 1887, became a boys school and a separate school for girls was erected.

The Dow Hill Girls School started its functioning as a Middle English School in 1898. According to (Dozey 1922: 191) the domiciled community should be indebted to the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir Ashley Eden. Both the institutes Victoria Boys' and Dow Hill Girls' were maintained by the Government for the education of the children of persons of European descent who are employed in any branch of its service. It was the Government school then from inception originally intended to teach only the children of government servants of the Anglo-Indian and European communities. Mrs. E. Peglar was appointed as the first headmistress. The school had 80 resident students on its rolls at the opening to which instructions are imparted up to the Eighth Standard. Staff of five junior mistresses and a matron were appointed. Pupils are also prepared for the Junior School Certificate Examination of the University of Cambridge (Dewan 1991: 134). It contributed a huge proportion for the education of the Anglo-Indians and Domiciled Europeans.

The Diocesan Girls' School was established in 1875 under Miss Cordue's excellent management (Avery 1878: 121). Miss Roby's School after the slip-disaster was taken over by the Clewer Sisters and started in 1904 under the above designation in the spacious building situated just beyond the Old Cemetery on the Lebong (Cart) Road. The institution during those days was under the supervision of the Sisters of the Community of St. John Baptist, Clewer, England, who were assisted by a competent staff of unprofessional teachers. Later in 1929 it was known as St. Michael's School where the girls were taught by the Sisters of the Order of St. John Baptist. It was passed over to Sisters in 1895, after it had been founded in 1886 by Bishop Milman of Calcutta as the Darjeeling Girls' School. In 1895 it was made a

Diocesan school with the Metropolitan as President. In 1899 a disastrous cyclone destroyed the site and all the constructions (Dash 1947). In 1900 the school was retained in two hills namely Rivers Hill and Richmond Hill.

With the growing demography in Darjeeling many of the hill schools were very crowded and some of them had long waiting lists. The schools had done their best to expand to meet the demand of the European and Anglo-Indian population. The years 1917-1922 the Dow Hill and Victoria schools at Kurseong have embraced wide-ranging building modifications which included a new dormitory building. It is estimated to cost over five lakhs where Sir Percy Newson made a generous contribution of two lakhs (Richley 1923).

On the line next was St. Joseph, North Point Darjeeling established in 1888. The St. Joseph's College was a large Jesuit institution where it carried with the teaching staff of which were composed mainly of members of the Jesuit order who were unsalaried. Although an aided school it received government help from its inception. The institution was opened under the direction of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. It was a Roman Catholic institute located nearly two kilometres from Darjeeling town. The boys went through a regular course of studies for the junior and Senior C.L. (Cambridge local) Examinations. The college was fully recognized as a higher secondary school by the Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate, and special classes equipped young students for entrance examinations keen on the different Government services. They were made ready for placements in accounts department, police service, hospitality etc. Although a Jesuit institution, pupils of other denominations were also admitted. The usual settings were being perceived with regard to their religious instruction (Newman's 1900: 51). At the commencing days there were only 35 boys registered but the number increased gradually and record shows in the year 1895 the number rose to over 200. The Annual Report of the Administration of Bengal Presidency during the year 1881-82, mentions that St. Joseph's Seminary was apparently a high school. Father Henry Depelchin was placed in charge of the small school of St. Joseph's. However, from small beginnings it had attained a place among schools of the first rank having 200 pupils as average strength for numerous years after 1895. Its ordinary curriculum worked up that of a secondary school, but it also had special branches which prepared youths for the different services. The school was separated into four departments: the Primary, Middle, Higher and Special Departments (O'Malley 1907).

On this line other institutes that were built by the missionaries and public segments were St Helen's Convent, Kurseong. The convent for European and Anglo-Indian children was founded in 1890. It was funded by the Roman Catholic Daughters of the Cross of Leige. The convent started its journey in a small leased cottage in 1890 with 36 pupils. After a year in 1891 the institute was shifted to larger premises. But in the earthquake of 1897 it was again shifted out in 1900 to a newly constructed building as the older one was damaged badly. Another school of such importance was the Mount Hermon School. It was established in 1895 by the missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. The school was built for European offspring to provide Christian education. The main school building was popularly known as Queen's Hill which was regarded as one of the first educational edifices in India with hostel accommodation. It was a co-educational institute. The St. Mary's Training College, Kurseong built in 1889 by the Belgian Jesuit Fathers of the R.C. Mission of Bengal. The staff of the college and most of the inmates were of Belgian origin. Shortly after the establishment of this college was completed for the education of children of the Christian servants attached to it the institute also worked for Indian offspring. The educational provision made here for children followed the opening of St. Alphonsus' School, which later developed in the upper primary standards by the gross revenue of the nineteenth century (Dozey, 1922). The St. Mary's College missionary efforts gradually started an orphanage and a dispensary in the neighbourhood next to the college. Mount Hermon was one magnificent establishment in the hills of Darjeeling for the European and Anglo-Indian communities built in 1895 (Chakrabarty 1988).

The most important institution for the European and the Anglo-Indian children was the St. Andrew's Colonial Homes also known as Graham's Home. It is an institution for the education and training of needy European and Anglo-Indian children. It was inaugurated in 1900 when the Government granted an estate of 100 acres of land on a peppercorn rent. This organisation covers within its range training in industrial lines comprising carpet-weaving, lacemaking, embroidery, tailoring, and carpentry. Not acknowledged by the educated Indians and not accepted socially by the Europeans, the Anglo-Indians in Graham's home grew up with a mixture of inferiority and superiority complexes. Many of the planters wished to educate their children, but if they sent them to a fee-paying school of good calibre, indiscretion would have to be admitted, and as a result, the child would have a miserable time. Consequently with no hope of a decent education the children ran wild on the estate

(Minto 1974: 54-55). Graham's Home became a new home for the Anglo-Indians of Bengal as well as India.

Darjeeling hill station had enormous importance for the Colonial government. The colonizers made it conceivable to take away the younger peers from the vulnerabilities that lay lurking in the plains without eradicating them from India altogether. The children of poor whites and other British officials' children were introduced in the hill schools with the social and cultural values that set them apart from Indians. These institutes permitted the British to visualise the prospect of their everlasting domicile in the Sub-continent without fear that physical and moral collapse would inevitably ensue. Simply the hill schools held the potential of the societal and ideological reproduction of Britain's imperial representatives. All these schools or institutes were established for European and Anglo-Indian children. They are the landmarks for Anglo-Indian education in Bengal. The main object of these schools was to offer the Anglo-Indian children a comprehensive and substantial education in the remarkably adequate climate of Darjeeling and inspire in them useful Christian knowledge at a modest fee. The institutions very minutely worked for the welfare and education of the Evangelical families of the Anglo-Indian Community. Anglo-Indian students from different parts of the country and abroad e.g. Burma came to these institutes on the hill.

Conclusion

The establishment of the educational institutions had a great impact on the education of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled Europeans children. These children were brought up in the European line of education and culture and religious belief to cope up with the aim to secure jobs in the colonies. Through the efficient initiative of the institutes the offspring of mixed parentage were gathered to be skilled industrially and morally, with a view to prepare them for entering effectively upon the struggle of existence in the British colonies like Canada, Australia, South Africa, or elsewhere. They were mentally and educationally unsuited for life in the new India. Their Western biased education had made them aliens in the country of their birth. They knew little or nothing of the culture and history of India. Their knowledge of the language was usually a bazaar Hindi which sufficed only for giving orders to servants. The Western education given in Anglo-Indian schools prior to Independence increased the difficulties of the community immeasurably. These Anglo-Indians were away from their mothers which was often the wish of the father. This state of affairs was accepted because the mothers were 'natives'.

Although the institutions were erected for those children gradually these institutions integrated native children of the hill regions. The native children were also given western education and Indian languages became an important and compulsory part of the curriculum, the erection of these institutes had a social significance. It saw an influx of native children from the state of Bhutan, suburbs of Terai and Assam Dooars. The hill society inherited a few western cultures in their food habits and costumes as well as cultures.

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