



ANGLO-INDIAN COMMUNITY IN RANCHI¹: ISSUES OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

The Anglo-Indian community in Ranchi comprises a small group of 40 families², the majority of which is occupied in the profession of teaching and settled at different locales, mostly on the outskirts of the city. Contributing extensively to the growth and prosperity of the state and constituting an integral part of Jharkhand's population, culturally this micro minority community can be identified as a distinctive minority group on account of its exclusivity in terms of lifestyle, food habits, dress and performance of rituals associated with Christianity. While memories of the past, for them, continue to be a source of nostalgia and revive their fondness for 'the good old days/ways', their present is, undoubtedly marked by their sense of belonging to and identification with their land of birth. In recent years, the city of Ranchi has witnessed remarkable growth and urbanization, having been accorded the status of the capital of the newly created state of Jharkhand. This rapid change in the social, cultural and political status of Ranchi has caused a perceptible change in the position and status of the Anglo-Indian community in Ranchi leading to issues and concerns relating to their identity and culture. In this paper I explore these issues in this paper, based primarily on the analysis and findings derived from interviews with the members of three different generations of Anglo-Indians in Ranchi.

INTRODUCTION

Dotted with hills, waterfalls, and lush green flora, Ranchi, the capital of the present state of Jharkhand and the summer capital of the erstwhile state of Bihar is now home to 40 Anglo-Indian families. Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar in 2000. Long before this bifurcation, in the 1920s, educational institutions (for example, Bishop

Westcott School) were opened for the Anglo-Indian children, as verified by the Bishop School's website which states that "Bishop Westcott Schools were founded by the Right Rev. Dr. Foss Westcott, Bishop of Chotanagpur³ in 1921. Bishop Westcott Boys' School was founded in 1927. Initially, the school was meant for Anglo-Indian children⁴, most of whose parents were either missionaries or in the foreign service" (Bishop Westcott Boys' School website). In due course, the schools multiplied and children of other communities also joined and more and more Anglo-Indian men and women took up the job of teachers and educators and made Ranchi their home. Here they lived and belonged but preserved those distinctive characteristics which marked them as Anglo-Indians, for instance, following a western life style, food habits, dress and performing the traditions, customs and rituals associated with Christianity. However, in the post-bifurcation era, the rapid change in the socio-cultural milieu of Ranchi, as described below, has threatened their cultural disintegration and the eventual extinction of their Anglo-Indian identity. Hence, I argue, in order to preserve their sense of community identity, they cling on to the rituals associated with Christianity, the performance of which crystallizes their sense of belonging to their community and constitutes their identity as an Anglo-Indian.

I propose here to consider identity as a "performative achievement" (Bell, 2007, p.4) and argue that for the members of the Anglo-Indian community in Ranchi, it is the performance of and a strict adherence to the rites and rituals associated with the Christian religion (for example, the Baptism of children, or the other sacraments of Confirmation and the Holy Communion, a distinctively styled wedding ceremony, masses and memorials), that helps to constitute their identity as an Anglo-Indian. To develop my arguments I draw upon Turner's definition of ritual as "the performance of a complex sequence of symbolic acts" (Turner, 1987, p. 75) or a "transformative performance revealing major classifications, categories, and contradictions of cultural processes" (Ronald Grimes cited in Turner, 1987, p. 75). My discussion on the performative nature of identity also takes into account Moore's views on ritual which according to her is, "a declaration of form against indeterminacy" (as cited in Turner, 1987, p. 94). An explicit connection between my postulation on the performative aspect of identity and Moore's conceptualization of ritual as a "declaration of form against indeterminacy" may not be immediately evident but can

be discerned through analysis of the data, collected through fieldwork, regarding the issues both of identity and culture of the Anglo-Indian community in Ranchi.

The Anglo-Indian community forms the core subject of the present study which is mainly based on primary data derived from a series of survey interviews conducted with three different generations of Anglo-Indians living in Ranchi.⁵ There were eleven respondents aged between twelve to sixty-three years. They were selected using a non-random sampling method based on their exposure to Ranchi's society and also their experience in the field of education. Purposive sampling was adopted to facilitate the study and ensure that all the representative members of the different generations of the Anglo-Indian community in Ranchi were included in the sample. The respondents belonged to three different generations – first, second and third. The average age of first generation Anglo-Indians was sixty years, second generation was forty-five years and the third generation was twenty-five years. However, there were exceptions such as like one of the respondents belonging to first generation who was forty-seven years old and his son, as part of the second generation was twelve years old. While most of the respondents were selected from the first generation owing to their prolonged exposure to Ranchi society (for example, one respondent has lived in Ranchi for sixty years while another has lived there for forty-four years), the first generation consisted of different batches of Anglo-Indians who arrived in Ranchi from the 1940s onwards. To identify the different generations of the Anglo-Indian community—first, second, and third—I relied on the information given by the respondents who identified the different batches of Anglo-Indians arriving in Ranchi from 1940s onwards. I verified and ascertained the authenticity of their data by cross checking from other sources (such as Principals of institutions).

The flexible nature of this sampling method helped me in selecting the respondents who could provide data relevant to the focus of the research. Based on the data collected from field work, analysis was carried out and findings were derived. To supplement the work, I have used secondary sources such as government and school websites, articles in newspapers, and journals as and where applicable.

CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Perhaps there is no other community as infinitesimally small as the Anglo- Indians, who nevertheless play such a significant role in the life of the city and its people. However, as one of the respondents commented that, “it is a very quiet community” (Female, 45 years, school principal, personal communication, March 9, 2016), very often their achievements and even their presence remain unacknowledged. In recent years, factors such as the creation of the state of Jharkhand along with rapid population growth, urbanization and industrialization have contributed to a perceptible change in the position and status of the Anglo- Indian community. This in turn is leading to issues and concerns relating to their identity and culture. In order to discuss and also critically examine my arguments on identity and culture, I draw on Chris Weedon’s influential work, *Identity and Culture: Narratives of Difference and Belonging* (2004). I begin my discussion with Jeffrey Weeks’ theorizations on identity, as quoted by Weedon. He says: “Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality” (cited in Weedon, 2004, p. 1). “The issue of belonging is crucial to the study of identity” (Lovell, 1998, p. i) and even raises the issue of identity when, that to which we belong, that which anchors us or gives base to our existence, is destabilized and “slips into a sea of indeterminacy” (cited in Turner, 1987, p. 78) for Mercer says “identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty” (cited in Weedon, 2004, p. 1).

Issues of culture and identity have acquired tremendous significance in this post-colonial world for, in the words of Chris Weedon, “this is a world in which the legacies of colonialism, including migration and the creation of diasporas, along with processes of globalization have put taken-for-granted ideas of identity and belonging into question” (Weedon, 2004, p. 2). Closely associated with this theorization on identity and belonging is Homi Bhabha’s conceptualization of culture’s hybridity referred to by Alison Blunt (2005) in her comprehensive work on Anglo-Indians. Bhabha’s emphasis in referring to cultural hybridity is on “the ‘inter’ – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture” (Blunt, 2005, p. 11). What Homi Bhabha calls the “in-

between space” is that which is in a state of flux and transition, and plays a vital role in the constitution of identity. Identity, thus, emerges as something that is culturally defined, and therefore, constantly in formation, constantly changing. A similar view has been expressed by Bradley Shope in his article on Anglo-Indian identity, where he speaks of a “production of identity”, especially of the hybrid or mixed races “that is marked simultaneously by continuity and change” (Shope, 2004, p. 175). So “instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact”, says Stuart Hall, “we should think instead, of *identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process*” (Weedon, 2004, p. 5 my emphasis), and always achieved/produced through performances. Turner explains this in more pragmatic terms: “Self is presented through the performance of roles, through performance that breaks roles, and through declaring to a given public that one has undergone a transformation of state or status” (Turner, 1987, p. 81). It is this process of continuity and change that makes the formation of identity more problematic, an issue which the Anglo Indians have been attempting to resolve since the days of the Raj.

As for the Anglo-Indians of Ranchi, the issues of identity and culture assume greater significance as the change in the socio-political status of Ranchi has caused perceptible changes in the life style and culture of all of its peoples and the Anglo-Indian community is no exception. Moreover, the improvement in infrastructure, the establishment of new offices, educational institutions and new job opportunities attracted immigrants from neighboring states of Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa as well as people from rural areas from within the state of Jharkhand. Some scholars on migration in India are of the opinion that migration within India is greatly influenced by “the pattern of region development and by the existing social structures” (Banerjee, 2015, p. 45). Census data on internal migration in India reveals that the “bulk of migration takes place over short distance, i.e. approximately 60 per cent of the migrants changing their residences within the district of birth (Intra-district); whereas 20 per cent are within the state of domicile (Intra-state); while the rest moves across the state boundaries (Inter-state)” (Banerjee, 2015, p. 51). This influx of immigrants, through introducing new cultural variety and diversity to the state, have exposed the Anglo-Indians to the customs, food, language, dress and festivals of the immigrant population. Amidst such heterogeneity and under these

circumstances, influences are bound to penetrate the Anglo-Indian culture and may eventually lead to cultural change.

Focusing on the change the identity of this hybrid community has undergone in the past few decades, the study reveals how the community is beset with uncertainty regarding the future of their community identity. The interviews I conducted revealed that while there was an exodus of the first generation of Anglo-Indians (who arrived in Ranchi in the 1940s) to Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand and USA, some of them preferred to remain in Ranchi and have become very much a part of the land and its soil, being integrated into Ranchi's society. For most of the Anglo-Indians who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s mainly from the neighboring railway junctions, such as Asansol, Jharsuguda, Jamshedpur and Chakardharpur, their movement seems to be driven by their desire to render their services in the field of education. By the 1970s, the city of Ranchi was already a centre of prestigious educational institutions which included the Bishop Westcott schools and the schools run by the missionaries which imparted education in this "tribal dominated region" (Roy, 2004, p. iii). Ranchi had been the hub of the tribal population, also known as "the Indigenous Peoples" (Lakra, 2011, p.12) or *Adivasis*⁶, but the condition of the tribes of Ranchi was miserable despite occupying the heartland of a state rich in natural resources. Documentary evidence shows that conditions of extreme poverty prevailed amongst these people and their educational development was very poor, as noted by Kujur who claims: "The tribal societies were considered the most difficult terrains for educational operations, both geographically and culturally" (2011, pp. 72-73). Given below is an extract from a 1930 report by the Indian Statutory Commission⁷ which describes the situation of the tribal people in the early decades of the twentieth century:

[the] degree of civilization attained by the aboriginals of Chota Nagpur is still so far below the degree attained by other races of Bihar and Orissa, that the aboriginals are unable to meet these other races on an equal footing...The aboriginal society is still in the primitive stage. (as cited in Prakash, 2001, p. 57)

Having no access either to education or even to the basic amenities, they led a very secluded life, their only interactions being those within their own community and tribes. The same report mentioned elsewhere that, "their improvidence lays them open to the wiles of the money-lender; their lack of education and their distinctive

languages place them at a great disadvantage in the Courts” (cited in Prakash, 2001, p. 53). The condition of the tribal people did not improve much even after Independence as:

[T]he development model adopted in India after Independence [...] premised on centralized rational bureaucratic planning and implementation of industry-led development was hardly suited to the development requirements of the tribal and more backward regions. The absence of meaningful contributions by local communities in the policy process, in terms of addressing the local needs and utilizing locally available resources, led to plans being drawn that were unsuitable for a sustained development effort[...]the local communities became passive beneficiaries of the state's development policy. (Prakash, 2001, pp.228-9)

The different batches of Anglo-Indians, who arrived in this tribal belt surrounded by dense forests after the 1930s, took up the job of teachers in various missionary and Bishop Westcott schools, where the majority of their students were from the tribal population. It was confirmed by one of my respondents that out of 40 families of Anglo-Indians living in and around Ranchi, barely two or three families were involved in business or were working in railways; the rest of them were teachers in schools, the majority of whom were employed in Bishop Westcott Schools (of which there are five in Ranchi district), which are run by Anglo-Indians. In the process of catering to the educational needs of the local population, they (first generation Anglo-Indians) settled down at different locales tucked away in quiet corners of Ranchi. In these locales they gradually acquired a clearer identity as a minority group of English speaking people who could be distinguished on account of their British and western life style, dress, food and eating habits. As time passed, the Anglo-Indian culture faded and they came closer to their Indian roots, as one of my respondents observed: “Back in the days of our great grandparents or even grandparents, as a community they felt distinguished and privileged because of their British roots. As the years passed, our culture faded away, we became more close to our Indian roots, we became more close to Indian communities” (Female, 25 years, PhD student, personal communication, March 10, 2016). Changes in their privileged position with regard to other communities have also affected relationships within their own community. Ties among community members have weakened and signs of cultural disintegration have set in becoming more pronounced in the post-bifurcation era. It is precisely at this juncture, that the need to conform to religious rituals, arises or rather

becomes more crucial. Moore explains the rationale behind the necessity to adhere to rituals:

Rituals, rigid procedures, regular formalities, symbolic repetitions of all kinds...are cultural representations of fixed social reality, or continuity. They present stability and continuity acted out and re-enacted; visible continuity. By dint of repetition they deny the passage of time, the nature of change, and the implicit extent of potential indeterminacy in social relations...these processes of regularization...act to provide daily regenerated frames...within which the attempt is made to fix social life, to keep it from slipping into the sea of indeterminacy. (as cited in Turner, 1987, p. 78)

It is clear that Moore views ritual as a process of regularization through which attempts are made to “fix social life”. In order to analyze and interpret the relevance of Moore’s conception of ritual to my discussion of identity being a “performative achievement”, I refer to ritual in the way Turner looked at it. Richard Schechner speaks about Turner’s lifelong preoccupation with rituals and the way it was helpful in resolving crises:

Turner, throughout his career, investigated ritual. He found it in social process, especially in the ways people resolved crises. Soon enough Turner realized social process was performative... He taught that there was a continuous dynamic process linking performative behavior – arts, sports, ritual, play - with social and ethical structure: the way people think about and organize their lives and specify individual and group values”. (Turner, 1987, p. 8)

So the ultimate goal of the enactment of rituals, according to Turner, is to bring order and coherence in lives. “Rituals”, Turner says, “*separated* specified members of a group from everyday life, *placed them in a limbo* that was not any place they were in before and not yet any place they would be in, then *returned* them, changed in some way, to mundane life” (Turner, 1987, p. 25). Ritual, then, separates specified members of a group from mundane life, and also identifies them as belonging to that particular group, their belonging being defined by their shared identity with the group. Arlette explains this relationship between rituals, identity and belonging: “Sentiments of belonging to a group are linked to references to origin and are enacted through participation in collective activities and rituals...thus enhancing a sense of belonging. Yet, belonging appears more closely defined by a shared identity with the group itself as social entity” (Arlette, 1998, p. 99). My analysis suggests that identity and culture are “performative achievements” to which the Anglo-Indians of Ranchi give compelling testimony. It is their participation in and/or performance of rituals which

underscores Anglo-Indians' sense of belonging to their community and constitutes their identity as an Anglo-Indian.

Patricia Brown in her book, *Anglo-Indian Food and Customs* (1998) refers to the observance by Anglo-Indians of "all the sacraments of the Christian church" (Brown, 1998, p. 38). She elaborates "children born to European father and Indian women were baptized Christians and adopted all the traditional feasts and celebrations associated with Christianity" (1998, p. 13). My study revealed that even today Christianity is an indispensable component of Anglo-Indian identity, as one of my interviewees, who is part of the first generation and also happens to be one of the oldest member of this community, confirmed: "Coming from British descent every Anglo-Indian has a Christian background" (Male, school principal, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Yet another respondent (from the third generation), who has been born and raised in Ranchi, expressed a similar view: "You cannot be an Anglo-Indian and not be a Christian. Paternal side has to be British blood or an Anglo-Indian ancestor. So an Anglo-Indian has to be a Christian" (Female, 25 years, Ph.D. Student, personal communication, March 10, 2016). In fact, even those Anglo-Indian men and women who have married outside their community, practice Christianity, baptize their children as Christians and generally follow the rites and rituals associated with Christianity, the performance of which crystallizes their sense of belonging to the Anglo-Indian culture and constitutes their identity as an Anglo-Indian. As one of my female respondents said: "For an Anglo Indian his or her religions life is of great importance even if they marry out of their community" (Female, 45 years, school principal, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

This brings me to another factor that seems to threaten the erasure of their identity as an Anglo-Indian, that is, the high rate of intermarriage⁸ with members of other communities. More and more Anglo-Indians, both men and women, are marrying outside their community and religion. Alison Blunt is of the opinion that the unprecedented rate of intermarriage between Anglo-Indians and people from other Indian communities poses challenges to their "ability to foster a distinctive Anglo-Indian identity" (Blunt, 1998, p. 205) and "would result in the decline and ultimate disappearance of the community" (1998, p. 200). For those who marry outside their

community, it is difficult to maintain their lifestyle, customs, culture and identity even within the confines of home, as stated by one of my first generation woman respondent who has married outside the Anglo-Indian community said:

The ones who stayed back and didn't merge into the mainstream of Indian life have become poor and non-existent. Those who have married Indian men have prospered and are doing well like me. (Female, 63 years, school teacher, personal communication, December 2, 2015)

However, as discussed earlier, even those men and women who have married outside their community and integrated into the mainstream culture have preserved the Christian character of their British descent. Evidence of this was revealed by both the male and female interviewees. The oldest male respondent, who has married outside his community and spent the 60 years of his life in Ranchi, confirmed: "I identify myself first and foremost as an Indian and then as a Christian" (Male, 60 years, private tutor, personal communication, March 28, 2016). One of my female interviewees also maintained: "From my side I have merged into the Indian community but our religion is the same: Christian Roman Catholic. We attend mass every Sunday. We have an English mass with an English choir. We have community breakfast for everybody during Christmas." (Female, 63 years, school teacher, personal communication, December 2, 2015). Hence, it is the performance of rituals, and more particularly it is the manner in which those rituals are performed, (which is more inclined towards a British way) which helps the Anglo-Indians to preserve their unique sense of Anglo-Indianness and also regenerates their sense of belonging to their community and culture. While the rituals and the sacraments of the Christian church are the same for both the tribal Christians and the Anglo-Indians, the British style, as mentioned earlier, is reflected through the use of the English language. The prayers, ritual readings and recitations, rites and ceremonies of the Anglo-Indians are performed in the English language whereas for the tribal Christians these are conducted either in the Hindi or tribal languages. Even the attire worn by the Anglo-Indians during the performance of these rituals is western styled, for instance they wear frocks, gowns and skirts, whereas the tribal Christians wear sarees or shalwar-suits.

Victor Turner, in his influential work, *Ethnography of Performance* (1987), refers to Milton Singer's argument regarding "cultural performances", which include, according

to Singer, apart from plays, concerts, and lectures, “also prayers, ritual readings and recitations, rites and ceremonies, festivals, and all those things which we classify under religion and ritual rather than with the cultural and artistic” (as cited in Turner, 1987, p. 23). These performances are, for Singer, “the elementary constituents of culture” (1987, p.23). Through their participation in western styled religious rites and ceremonies performed in western attire, I argue that Anglo-Indians of Ranchi are able to constitute a distinctive Anglo-Indian culture and also preserve their sense of community identity.

The interviews revealed that the sense of community identity, as exhibited by the members of the community, had different meanings for the Anglo-Indians belonging to different age groups and settled in different parts of Ranchi. While for some of them, it is only a means of identifying themselves with other members of the community, for others it is more a means of manifesting a sense of belonging to the Anglo-Indian culture. One of my first generation respondent living in the outskirts of Ranchi expressed his intense fondness for community activities, customs and rituals, such as Christmas programs, get together for children and adults, visits to church, anniversaries and memorials. This was ubiquitous in conversation which was filled with the reminiscences of the past Anglo-Indian life and culture.

My conversation with some of the older members of the first generation led me to conclude that the credit for the perpetuation of Anglo-Indian culture may be given to them. They seem to serve as storehouses of memory and traditions and through their unique lifestyle and culture continue to provide an authentic source of Anglo-Indian history and identity. Though many Anglo-Indians of this generation have already migrated from India, those domiciled in Ranchi still have a close affinity with the West. This is reflected through their western style of life and culture, their English language education, their observance of Christian sacraments, their western oriented mentality and dress and their participation in community activities. The interviews revealed that in comparison to the younger members, they seem to have succeeded in preserving their sense of community identity, despite their exposure to local environment and external influences. However, for the younger members of this community, preserving this sense of community identity has not been an easy task. Being born in the post-Independence era, they exhibit a greater understanding and

acceptance of other Indian customs and ways of life. One of the younger members of first generation respondents maintained: "Things are changing. Indian functions and festivals are now becoming a part of the Anglo-Indian life" (Male, 47 years, school teacher, personal communication, December 4, 2015). For these people, cultural ties within the extended families and community and memories of the past are the only remnants of their Anglo-Indian identity.

The passage of time and the change in Ranchi's situation from being a remote city to a capital city has made the members of this community vulnerable to external influences. It has also brought significant changes in their status and position. While sometimes there arises a nostalgic longing for the 'good old days', there also exists a concern for the future of their children. One of the members of the first generation whom I interviewed also voiced his apprehensions regarding the marginalization of his community by the dominant culture/group. He said: "Though we are regarded as human beings. It's not the same as other communities" (Male, 47 years, school teacher, personal communication, December 22, 2014). Robyn Andrews, who carried out research with Anglo-Indian community in Calcutta, writes about the patterns of thought which was commonly evident among the Anglo-Indians of Calcutta: "Some spoke of being disadvantaged in the job market, others of being frustrated by many things Indian, most of generally being out of place in India" (Andrews, 2007, p. 39). Some of them even felt that they did not "fit in this society", and this society excluded them. Perhaps, this explains why Anglo-Indians sometimes feel isolated and alienated as a community.

The survey interviews revealed that in the midst of pulls and pressures generated by the changing socio-cultural milieu, the Anglo-Indian community in Ranchi is striving to give a "visible continuity" to their reality and perceptible shape to their identity through the performance of religious rites and rituals. Members of the consecutive batches of the first generation Anglo-Indians of Ranchi and their children and grandchildren are still rendering their services in the field of education on account of which they are closely associated with the tribal population of Ranchi. Their Christian faith and their status as a minority are other factors which increase their social proximity with the indigenous people. Both the Anglo-Indians and the tribals of Ranchi enjoy minority status. The Anglo-Indians as well as most of the tribals of

Ranchi practice Christianity. Their religion becomes a means of increasing their intimacy with the tribal people, while at the same time it seems to weaken their sense of belonging to and their relationship with their own community. My analysis of the data revealed that this kind of paradox causes a further disintegration of their Anglo-Indian identity, and creates in them a sense of alienation expressed in the following words of one of my interviewee:

The good old days are gone. No more shows, no May Queen balls, no June Rose, and neither does Christmas ring a bell. The gorgeous flavours of mulligatawny, pepper fry, yellow rice, and ball curry, with a blend of the South Indian pepper water all seem to be vanishing. Slowly the community is blending with the Indian community. (Male, 47 years, school teacher, personal communication, December 4, 2015)

Paul Harris, the Australia based Anglo-Indian film maker, expressed a similar view in an interview given to Fiona Fernandez:

Anglo-Indians are a tiny, microscopic community when compared to the population of other Indian communities and it would be very easy to get lost within mainstream Indian society. Like most parts of the world and definitely in India, many communities have been assimilated into and are now part of mainstream Indian society; Anglo-Indians are no exceptions. With a mixing of different communities, with caste, culture and language no longer being a barrier compared to earlier times, society tends to become more homogenous. Along with this, there is a loss of many traditions and customs. With younger generations being part of a new globalised culture, the past tends to get forgotten and there is the danger that history too could get lost or forgotten along the way. (Fernandez, 2014)

To overcome this weakening sense of being Anglo-Indian they look more and more towards their future generation to seek wholeness and stability and to give permanence to their existence. This also explains how different generations of Anglo-Indians domiciled in Ranchi understand their identity and seek to shape it. Identity for them is a confluence of several factors: their use of language, their performance of Anglo-Indian customs and rituals which keeps them tied to their community, their relationship with their land of settlement, their dreams and aspirations for their future generation.

CONCLUSION

Pile and Thrift (1995) speak of the difficulties of mapping the human subject. They say:

The human subject is difficult to map for numerous reasons. There is the difficulty of mapping something that does not have precise boundaries. There is the difficulty of mapping something that cannot be counted as singular but only as a mass of different and sometimes conflicting subject positions. There is the difficulty of mapping something that is always on the move, culturally, and in fact. There is the difficulty of mapping something that is only partially locatable in time-space. (Pile and Thrift, 1995, p. 2)

Difficulties increase if the issue under consideration concerns the identity of the human subject for it is difficult to define something that is constantly changing, acquiring new forms, something “that is never absolutely stable, that is subject to the play of history and the play of difference” (as cited in Christian, 1997, p. 9). But as Turner says, “man is a performing animal” (1987, p. 81). Through performances, a human person knows oneself and makes oneself known to others. Turner explains: “Self is presented through the performance of roles, through performance that breaks roles” (Turner, 1987, p. 81).

Referring to Turner’s views on performance and rituals and analyzing the data derived from my survey interviews, I established a connection between belonging, community, ritual and identity, and concluded that identity, for the Anglo-Indians of Ranchi, is achieved performatively. The study revealed that the changing socio-cultural milieu of Ranchi has made it difficult for them to preserve their distinctive identity as an Anglo-Indian, as one of my first generation respondents who has arrived in Ranchi in the 1980s observed:

There is a lonely feeling. Most of our people have gone away to Australia, England, New Zealand. That connection seems to be getting far. How we used to enjoy ourselves in the past and now it is so different. We don’t get the same feeling at all. Christmas used to be packed with activities. We used to have nearly about 5-6 shows in that entire month. We used to have the fancy dress, we used to have Christmas tree celebrations and sports and so many things. We used to end up with the picnic. Nothing now... You just have a handful of the Anglo-Indians and most of them want to be in the house. They don’t want to come out. It is all so different now. We are infusing with the local community. We are already like natives now. (Male, 47 years, school teacher, personal communication, December 22, 2014)

But as Stuart Hall remarks “Only deep and rigorous measures... can help us navigate these treacherous waters” (Weeden, 2004, p. viii). The findings revealed that it is their strict adherence to the performance of rites and rituals associated with

Christianity, which strengthens their sense of belonging to their community and constitutes their Anglo-Indian identity, and hence enables them to save it from eventual extinction.

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NOTES

1. The city of Ranchi acquired the status of state capital when the state of Jharkhand came into existence on November 15, 2000. Prior to this, it was a district in the state of Bihar and on account of its climate and hilly topography it earned the status of summer capital in the undivided state of Bihar. Ranchi is a tribal dominated region, spread over an area of 4,963 sq km., and having a population of 2,912,022 according to 2011 census.
2. For the data regarding the number of Anglo-Indian families, I rely on the information given by present President of the Ranchi chapter of Anglo Indian Association. There are 40 Anglo-Indian families out of which 36 are registered with the association.
3. A plateau in eastern India. Ranchi is located in the southern part of the Chotanagpur plateau.
4. Children of British descent in the classic 19th century sense.
5. A series of interviews in two different phases were conducted. Using the non-random sampling method, 11 respondents aged between 12 to 63 years were selected. The respondents belonged to three different generations- first, second and third. The average age of first generation was 60

years, second generation was 45 years and third generation was 25 years. However, there were exceptions like one of the respondents belonging to first generation was 47 years old and his son as second generation was 12 years old. While most of the respondents were selected from first generation owing to their prolonged exposure to Ranchi society (for example, one respondent has lived in Ranchi for 60 years while another has lived for 44 years), the first generation consisted of different batches of Anglo-Indians who arrived in Ranchi from 1940s onwards. To identify the different generations of the Anglo-Indian community (first, second, third) I relied on the information given by the respondents, who regarded Anglo-Indians arriving in Ranchi from 1940s onwards as the first generation, their children as second generation, and their grandchildren as the third generation. I verified and ascertained the authenticity of their data by cross checking from other sources (e.g. Principals of institutions). The ex-president of the Anglo-Indian Association was the first to be approached and interviewed. His name was recommended to me by Reverend Fr. Britius Ekka. My institutional affiliation (Nirmala College, a Christian Minority institution) facilitated me in approaching Reverend Fr. Britius Ekka and the members of Anglo- Indian community in Ranchi.

6. The tribal people of Jharkhand are referred to as *Adivasis*. According to the official government of Jharkhand website there are thirty-two tribes in the state of Jharkhand. The socio-economic condition of most tribals is poor, with low literacy and employment rates. The state of Jharkhand owes its existence to the long and arduous struggle (popularly known as Jharkhand movement) initiated by the tribals through the creation of Adivasi Mahasabha in 1938, which was renamed the Jharkhand Party in 1949-1950. The Jharkhand movement gradually developed into full-fledged movement gradually drawing support from all the sections of the population. Its ultimate goal was the creation of a separate state of Jharkhand to improve the socio-economic and political condition of the marginalized tribals. (Please see Amit Prakash's (2001), *Jharkhand: Politics of Development and Identity*) for a comprehensive study of situation of tribals in Ranchi. A majority of the tribal population resides in the rural areas and is struggling for survival, as asserted a researcher in his paper titled, 'Tribal Issues in Jharkhand' presented in a symposium held at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi on 4th February, 2011, in the midst of "extremism, poverty, malnutrition, starvation, disease, death and extinction" (Lakra, 2011).
7. Popularly referred to as the Simon Commission Report.
8. The survey interviews revealed that a number of Anglo-Indians have married tribals, Hindus and Bihari (from Bettiah, a small town in Bihar) Christians.

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