



EXERCISING AGENCY WITHIN PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS: THE CAREER NARRATIVES OF ANGLO-INDIAN WOMEN EMPLOYED AS SCHOOL TEACHERS IN BANGALORE

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings from qualitative research on the relationship between gender, cultural, and professional identities amongst Anglo-Indian women employed as school teachers in Bengaluru (Bangalore), in the later part of the 20th century. The histories of linguistic and religious minority schools in the Southern Indian city of Bangalore and that of the Anglo-Indian community are closely related. In both colonial and post-colonial India, the community's biracial status created specific economic opportunities and constraints. As job opportunities for Anglo-Indian men became restricted by the changing policies of the colonial state across the 19th and 20th centuries, Anglo-Indian women sought jobs in nursing, office administration and teaching. Over the 20th century, Anglo-Indian women's cultural capital (proficiency in English, familiarity with Western literature, music and theatre) made them valuable employees in religious (Christian) and linguistic minority schools. The women interviewed mobilized this cultural capital alongside social capital (networks of relatives and friends within the community and church) to find employment as teachers. In doing so they showed a marked degree of agency but once employed, their agency tended to be circumscribed by gender and community identity. Based on in-depth interviews that employed a life story interview technique, we argue that Anglo-Indian teachers' professional lives are shaped by a complex relationship among economic exigencies, cultural norms, community loyalties and religiosity. The paper extends existing literature on the community by highlighting women's contribution and experience as educators. It also contributes to the nascent literature on school teachers' lives in India from an intersectional perspective by focussing on a minority community.

INTRODUCTION

The history of the Anglo-Indian community is closely connected with the history of English language schooling in India.¹ This paper emerges from a research project that aims to examine the crucial role played by Anglo-Indian women in this history. Employing the life story interviewing technique we investigated the career narratives of Anglo-Indian women in the school teaching profession in Bangalore, a former colonial cantonment that is now home to India's information technology industry which accounted for estimated revenues of US\$ 146 billion in 2015 (NASSCOM, 2015). In part, the research aims to expand the growing field of Anglo-Indian studies by examining the contribution of women from the community in the field of education and also responds to the call from within education studies for research into the lives and careers of teachers from diverse social backgrounds (Batra, 2005; Manjrekar, 2013). By investigating the experiences of teachers from a minority community it offers an intersectional perspective on teachers' lives.

Life story interviews have been used in both sociological and historical research to chronicle the experiences of marginalized groups (women, religious and cultural minorities, working classes) and providing histories from below as a counterpoint to those written using archival sources that typically give voice to the powerful as is argued by several oral historians and practitioners of women's studies including Hamilton and Shopes (2008), Khotari (2003), Mukherjee (2010) and Stree Shakti Sanghatana (1989). Catherina Moss (2014) and Robyn Andrews (2014) have also argued for its value in chronicling Anglo-Indian experiences.

Using life-story interviewing techniques, we interviewed sixteen Anglo-Indian women in the school teaching profession in Bangalore. We elicited accounts of their professional lives, 'career narratives' which we found to be deeply influenced by gender, community identity and religion. We further interviewed nine other 'key informants': experienced educators working with schools that employed our interviewees or members of the Anglo-Indian community employed in other professions who have family members in teaching. All interviewees are referred to using pseudonyms (both first and last names) and the identities of key informants are anonymized in keeping with the principles of ethical research practice.

In this paper we examine in depth the accounts of three interviewees to understand recurrent themes about professional life, gender, community identity and religiosity which emerged across all the accounts. These three accounts are chosen because they might be said to be representative (as much as an individual life is representative) of the themes that emerged in other interviews as well, but also because they are marked by particularly significant experiences of struggle.

We quote extensively from the interviews because women's accounts of themselves offer insight into how women construct and narrate their professional and social selves within the limits of their social and personal circumstances. Our key focus is the question of agency in the narratives of interviewees, how it is expressed and how it is constrained by normative notions of femininity, professionalism and community identity. We also examine creative strategies women use to expand their agency.

While there are similarities between the narratives, particularly in the way women invoke religious beliefs and deploy social capital, each has unique elements. Reading each narrative individually as a composite whole enabled us to suggest how individuals make sense of their lives. Even with their distinctive and particular elements, recurrent themes across the narratives give insights into how women deploy agency within the constraints. To further elucidate these themes, the in-depth examination of the three narratives is followed by a discussion which draws on accounts from the other thirteen interviewees.

This project also attempts to excavate voices of Anglo-Indian women in postcolonial India. Although Anglo-Indian men have also been employed in teaching, we focus on women because of their dual marginalization in terms of gender and minority identity. When communities face marginalization, women's identities become a source of public debate as we have recently seen in the case of Muslim minority women in France where questions of religious identity, dress and women's rights became grounds for state intervention and community resistance (Taylor, 2016; Cigainero, 2016). In such situations, women's voices on issues that directly impact them are often muted by the voices of male community leaders, politicians and mainstream

media. In India we saw this in the controversial Shah Bano case in the 1980s (Agnes, 2007) and more recently in the cultural policing incidents in coastal Karnataka and other parts of India (Belliappa, 2014).

Earlier research such as Lionel Caplan's (2001) ethnography in Chennai and Alison Blunt's analysis of textual and oral history has addressed issues of gender (2002, 2005). Based on his ethnographic research Caplan argues that postcolonial Anglo-Indian households are matrifocal in nature and that women often play the role of (financial) provider while also keeping families together across generations through care work; this dual responsibility is often acknowledged and appreciated within the community. However, he argues that this was not always the case. In the colonial period, women's positions were not part of the community's public discourse which was focussed on the pressing issues of identity and belonging, poverty and unemployment (Caplan, 2000).

Alison Blunt (2002, 2005) makes a somewhat different argument while discussing gendered conceptions of home and belonging amongst Anglo-Indians. She argues that historically the difference between Anglo-Indians and other Indian communities is expressed in terms of male European ancestry while the female ancestor is conflated with the image of the home and motherland. In the colonial period this led to representations of Anglo-Indian women as cultural reproducers within the domestic sphere and the association of the domestic sphere with community building for the future. Although the community viewed its women as emancipated in terms of their presence in professional work (and therefore playing a role in the emancipation of other Indian women) there was some ambivalence towards their interactions with European men (Blunt, 2002).

Earlier discussion on education amongst Anglo-Indians highlights a paradox that some of our key informants also mentioned: that although the community values education as a means of upward social mobility, educational standards and literacy levels vary by class (Andrews, 2005). Reasons cited for lower educational levels include limited fluency in other Indian languages (which are necessary for success in the grade 10 public exams), lack of resources and (for boys) poor work ethic.

However, Andrews (2005) suggests that this is an erroneous characterization as Anglo-Indians parents (including those with limited incomes) take pains to ensure their children's success in school.

In this paper we draw on insights from the above works but focus attention particularly on women's contribution as teachers. Before engaging with the narratives of our informants, however, a discussion of scholarship on gender and work within the community, on the relationship between the community's history and that of English language schooling in India, and on use of oral history methods is necessary.

GENDER, WORK AND THE ANGLO-INDIAN COMMUNITY

An early examination of gender and economic activity was undertaken by R.A. Schermerhorn who argues that the lack of steady employment undermined men's positions as providers, eroding "the very element in the male role that endows it with respect and dignity" (1975, p.176) while women's job opportunities expanded since they served "a symbolic function in an office in which 'female congeniality' was an asset" (Gist and Wright, 1973, p.65 in Schermerhorn 1975, p.178). His analysis unfortunately reinforces many gendered and racial prejudices against Anglo-Indian women. His conclusion that the self-concept of both Anglo-Indian women and men collides with the perspectives of mainstream Indian society merits discussion but requires a framework founded less on patriarchal gender roles.

Uther Charlton-Stevens (2016) who documented the experiences of Anglo-Indian women in professional life (particularly nursing) in the late-colonial period provides a more nuanced context for understanding their postcolonial experiences. Charlton-Stevens discusses the ways in which Anglo-Indian nurses constructed their identities as Anglophone Christians from India in the early 20th century by identifying with what they viewed as a Western (chiefly British) sense of professionalism and attention to detail that they acquired via their training under European nuns. Similarly, many interviewees proudly invoke their teacher training under Indian and Irish nuns and lay teachers at Sacred Heart Convent in Bangalore and at Church Park in Chennai to explain their own professionalism and creativity.

As Charlton-Stevens argues, Anglo-Indian women's engagement in paid employment is influenced partly by the fragility of men's employment. Since the community emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries out of domestic relationships between European men and Indian women,² their employment opportunities in the colonial period depended initially on the vagaries of the East India Company and later on the colonial state. They were also influenced by the racial anxieties of the colonizers, which grew stronger as the community grew in numbers and intermingled with domiciled Europeans (Muthiah and MacLure, 2013).

In the early years of imperialist expansion, Anglo-Indians were conscripted into the army by invoking racial ties to Britain. However, as more young men began arriving from Britain in search of employment, Anglo-Indian men were marginalized. Once the colonial state had established itself, military employment shrank considerably until the 20th century when the World Wars saw increased recruitment.

Meanwhile, Anglo-Indians sought jobs (usually lower and mid-level positions) in the railways and in the public works department. Muthiah and MacLure (2013) argue that most men sought jobs that were available locally with minimal qualifications; the railways became almost a hereditary occupation for Anglo-Indians offering secure employment and housing. Their knowledge of English also qualified them for employment in postal and telegraph services. All railway employees were members of the Auxiliary Force (India) established in 1931, a force frequently called upon to suppress civil disturbances related to the independence movement, and this raised questions about the community's ties with India (Muthiah and MacLure, 2013).

In his book *Britain's Betrayal in India* (1964/2007), Frank Anthony, who represented the community in Parliament several times from 1950 to 1993³ bemoans the limited employment available to Anglo-Indians, due to the prejudices of both the British and sections of mainstream Indian society. With reference to teaching, he argues that the preference for employing Europeans (in the colonial period) restricted opportunities for Anglo-Indians in missionary schools though many schools were established with donations from wealthy Anglo-Indians.

With the expansion of European education through the 19th and 20th centuries other Indian communities began acquiring facility in English. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs began to seek employment in government services and political representation (through the Morley Minto Act of 1909 and the Montague Chelmsford reforms of 1919) which further eroded the employment opportunities of Anglo-Indian men. As a result Anglo-Indian women filled the gap and began to enter employment well before women of other Indian communities and comparable class positions. Their preferred occupations were nursing, midwifery, teaching, and if they were very poor, tailoring or domestic service (Anderson, 2011).

Anglo-Indian women's entry into paid employment in the 19th century could also be explained by their limited opportunities to find security through marriage to European men (Anderson, 2011). First, the years following the mutiny of 1857 (also referred to as the First War of Independence) saw the solidification of social boundaries between colonizers and colonized and increasing racial prejudice against the biracial Anglo-Indian community whose presence testified to an earlier period when these boundaries were more permeable (Dalrymple, 2004). The community was viewed through the lens of popular racial theories of the period which raised concerns about the intermingling of races (Caplan, 2001; Muthaiah and Maclure, 2013).

Second, the arrival of European women in India for marriage and missionary work over the 19th century further circumscribed Anglo-Indian women's chances of marriage. European women's racial anxieties frequently led to representations of Anglo-Indian women as loud, licentious and unsuitable for marriage with European men (Caplan, 2001). As a result, the community became increasingly endogamous, but Anglo-Indian men's opportunities also shrank (partly due to the same racial prejudice and also as a result of the policies of the colonial state). Hence Anglo-Indian women had little choice in seeking employment.

These circumstances have played an important role in defining Anglo-Indian women's relationship with professional work even generations later in independent India. While employment offers opportunities for self-actualization, our research

indicates that women also view it as a means of securing family income. Their attitude towards employment is different from that of many other Indian communities of comparable class position where women's employment is often viewed either as a necessary evil (an indication of men's failure as providers) or explained as 'merely' a means for self-expression. Research on (non-Anglo-Indian) women employed in Bangalore's information technology industry has found that woman's earnings are seldom acknowledged as necessary to the family's financial security even when their incomes exceed that of their husbands or fathers (Belliappa, 2013). We argue later that the agency that underscores our interviewees' accounts is part of their cultural inheritance, given Anglo-Indian women's long presence in paid employment. One interviewee, Francesca Sinha, sums it up succinctly, "Anglo-Indians were not born with a silver spoon in their mouths."

In the 20th century, racial prejudices tended to propel Anglo-Indian women towards careers with which the community had historically been associated and which enabled them to deploy their cultural capital (knowledge of English and familiarity with Western traditions in music, art and theatre) and their social capital (relationships within the community and the church). As Schermerhorn's (1975) analysis suggests, Anglo-Indian women who went into office work were perceived as vulnerable to sexual exploitation by co-workers (men) of other communities. Our interviewees' accounts suggest that teaching in missionary schools or community run schools enabled Anglo-Indian women to hold a respectable position in society and work within a relatively non-threatening environment.

During the colonial period schools with English as the main medium of instruction were established across the country. The earliest schools were founded in Chennai (formerly Madras) and Kolkata (Calcutta) to serve the growing European population⁴. Small railway towns saw the establishment of English medium primary schools for the children of Anglo-Indian railway employees (Anthony, 1964). Missionary run teacher training institutes in Calcutta, Madras and Bangalore provided subsidized training to Anglo-Indian women with high school diplomas enabling them to teach primary school. Bangalore's training centre initially established at Sacred Heart Convent by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd was later taken over by the Notre

Dame Sisters. The students gained a professional qualification at a relatively young age (often while still in their teens) with little expense. Most interviewees obtained their teacher training certification either at Good Shepherd's training institute in Bangalore or Church Park in Madras. Only a few came from families that had the wherewithal to fund an undergraduate degree and a Bachelor's in Education which certified them to teach up to high school at a higher pay grade. All interviewees reported obtaining jobs as soon as their training ended.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLING IN BANGALORE

Until independence, Bangalore was divided into two separate units, the *pete* (town) administered by the Mysore Maharajah and the British cantonment. Gradually a small Anglo-Indian population grew in Bangalore 'cantt.' (alongside Tamil Hindus and Deccan Muslims), where the major languages were English, Tamil and Daccani (a dialect of Urdu). The local language, Kannada was confined to the *pete* (Nair, 2005).⁵ After independence, the cantonment retained its cultural and linguistic distinctiveness, remaining what one of our informants called "a little bit of England in India."

As the European and Anglo-Indian population in Bangalore grew in the 19th century several missionary schools were established to educate European children beginning with St Joseph's Boys' High School in 1858 and Bishop Cottons Girls and Boys Schools in 1864 (Muthiah and Maclure 2013). Over the next 90 years until independence several missionary schools were established by the Catholic and the Anglican Churches employing (mainly) European and some Anglo-Indian teachers. After independence, as the European population dwindled, more Anglo-Indians gained employment in these schools (Anthony, 1964).

After independence the Anglo-Indian community led by Frank Anthony established co-educational schools in Calcutta, Delhi and Bangalore under the administration of the All India Anglo-Indian Educational Trust. The best known of these, which were established as linguistic minority institutions, are the Frank Anthony Schools. Anthony associated the promotion of English with the survival of the community in independent India. He also viewed the schools as important to create employment

for the community and provide subsidized education to Anglo-Indian children whilst also educating fee-paying children from other communities (Anthony, 1964). His writings suggest that the community attempted to create a niche for itself in the newly independent nation by contributing to education. The Frank Anthony School was established in Bangalore in 1967 followed by three smaller schools founded by Anglo-Indian families.

It could be argued that the Anglo-Indian schools (and older missionary schools) which used English as a medium of instruction became part of the nation's modernization project. After independence many public sector organizations including Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL), Bharat Electricals Limited (BEL) and Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT), grew in Bangalore. The upper-caste, technically-qualified, middle-class (non-Anglo-Indian) employees of the public organisations and working class service providers to the public sector augmented their cultural capital by giving their children an English-language, modern education. Between the 1960s and the 1990s, many pupils in the English medium schools came from such families. All these schools are affiliated to the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations, set up by the All India Anglo-Indian Association in 1956. The Council (as it is popularly called) conducts matriculation examinations at the end of high school. In Bangalore, Council affiliated schools enjoy greater prestige than those affiliated with the Karnataka government-administered Secondary School Leaving Certificate board which is believed to have lower standards especially in English. There are currently between 80 and 100 Council affiliated schools in Bangalore though not all are religious or linguistic minority institutions.

Pedagogically, these schools tended to promote rote learning for much of the 20th century although interviewees report that in the 21st century they have incorporated teaching methods that promote critical thinking. As interviewees' accounts suggest, premium is placed on the three Rs⁶, on fluency in English and on sport, music and theatre. Qualities such as punctuality, neatness, orderliness and discipline are valued and there is strong emphasis placed on aesthetics of presentation whether it is of notebooks, uniforms or school plays.⁷

Interviews with key informants suggest that Anglo-Indian teachers are valued for inculcating the above qualities in their pupils. A non-Anglo-Indian principal of one missionary school lamented the dwindling number of Anglo-Indian teachers. “They were very particular”, he said, a phrase that we heard several times, “[they stressed] the little graces of how to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ and how to wear your school uniform.” Like many other key informants he bemoaned the loss to Indian education from the migration and diversification of young Anglo-Indians into more lucrative careers. Sandra, an interviewee whose narrative is discussed later, receives frequent requests from principals eager to recruit Anglo-Indian teachers. “If I knew the tree which grows Anglo-Indian teachers, I tell them, I’ll shake it and they will fall out,” she quipped.

Bangalore’s emergence as India’s software capital after the 1991 economic reforms has brought new schooling choices to the city. While the single sex missionary schools and co-educational minority institutions continue to be actively sought after, in the 21st century, new ‘alternative’ schools (promoting more child-centred educational philosophies such as that of Maria Montessori, J. Krishnamurthi and Rudolph Steiner) and international schools (with state-of-the-art infrastructure) cater to the new elite from the upper echelons of business and industry. Parents seek a broad-based education and affiliation with international examination boards such as the International Baccalaureate.

This brief history of schooling in Bangalore is important to understand the careers of the teachers interviewed, who began their careers in either missionary schools or Anglo-Indian schools in the 1960s and 1970s, continuing until the 21st century and experiencing first-hand the changes in the city’s schooling ‘market’ and educational ethos. It is often argued that the existence of a large English-speaking workforce has been crucial to India’s economic growth. Given the number of students in each cohort in the Anglo-Indian schools (sometimes more than 300 in each grade level in a given school), individual teachers in these schools have taught several thousand middle-class Indians who were subsequently employed in government service and private industry. These teachers played an important role in India’s globalization story, which is rarely recognized in public discourse⁸.

METHODS

Our Interviewees

In the summer of 2013, we interviewed sixteen women schoolteachers between 37 and 77 years of age, who have spent the larger part of their careers in Bangalore. In addition, we interviewed four senior educators who had worked in schools employing Anglo-Indian teachers (though not Anglo-Indians themselves), two male Anglo-Indian schoolteachers, two Anglo-Indians who are not teachers and a film-maker who has made films on the Anglo-Indian community. Interviews with these nine key informants gave us greater insight into the lives of teachers and the schools where they worked.

Three interviewees were in their 70s, eight in their 60s, two in their 50s, one in her forties and two in their 30s. All the interviewees identify as Christian (Catholic or Protestant). Thirteen are married, of whom three have been widowed. Three are unmarried. The married teachers all have children, with family sizes ranging from one to six children. Seven teachers also have grandchildren. Five interviewees have retired from service; two of these continue to give tuitions and one teaches at a community college. The remaining eleven are still working, of which nine are attached to a particular school and one is an educational consultant. Two of the interviewees have taught outside India and three have taught at international schools within India while nine have worked only within Christian schools in India. Of our interviewees, four obtained Bachelors' degrees prior to starting their careers. Five reported continuing their education while working, pursuing B.Ed and MA degrees. Seven had gone through their careers with a TTC (Teacher Training Certificate), and one had received no formal teacher training at all.

Accessing Interviewees

After trying to meet interviewees via school authorities with limited success, we used a snowballing method, i.e. finding our first interviewees via personal contacts. Having enjoyed the process of being interviewed, our first interviewees introduced us to others in the community. We later found that in spite of our written assurances of confidentiality, schools were concerned about the possibility of negative media

publicity (a threat that parents often use when complaining against teachers). Therefore in spite of our association with an established educational institution and assurances that we were not journalists, principals were largely reluctant to introduce us to their teachers. Interviewees' accounts also suggested that salaries are a contentious issue which contributed to the schools' reluctance to facilitate our meetings with teachers.

The Interview Process

Interviews with teachers lasted between two and three hours and were preceded by a preliminary meeting or phone conversation in which we clarified our aims. The life-story method enables interviewees to reminisce on past events with the interviewer acting as coxer and co-constructor of the narrative (Plummer, 2001). As the term 'narrative' implies, a sense of temporality guides the account. Although our questions focussed primarily on professional life, personal and family details emerged in association with career narratives.

Interviews were succeeded by follow-up meetings with the researchers, who raised further questions and gave interviewees a copy of their own interview transcript. We also had further phone conversations with some interviewees in order to clarify questions that occurred to the researchers during analysis. As research relationships developed into friendships, we entered ethically delicate ground and needed to exercise discretion in analysis and dissemination of accounts.

In spite of some initial reluctance (expressed for example, as questions, "what could I tell you about your research?") most interviewees were quite forthright. Interview dynamics with regard to power were, nonetheless, constantly shifting. Interviewees sometimes displayed a strong sense of authority and agency in their narratives, and at other times, second-guessed themselves or sought affirmation from the interviewer, both during and after the interview. We are at present working on a paper that discusses this shifting dynamic in detail.⁹ A few interviewees became particularly invested in the project, wishing us well before conferences and even offering to proofread the paper! Their enthusiasm leaves us both grateful and humbled.

Confidentiality

On presenting the research in conferences, we were frequently encouraged to reconsider anonymizing interviewees' accounts and naming their schools for the sake of 'authenticity' but we concluded that our analysis is unlikely to be strengthened by naming interviewees or schools where they were employed. Rather, by doing so we would simply lay them open to the charge of revealing sensitive information about current/former employers or raising contentious issues. A few interviewees said that they were unafraid of being identified by the specificities in their accounts that could make them recognizable in spite of the pseudonyms, but for the sake of uniformity we have substituted their names with pseudonyms as well.

THREE NARRATIVES OF ANGLO-INDIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS

In this section we present and discuss the narratives of three interviewees. All interviewees have faced the adversities which mark a human life, such as bereavement, illness, and economic hardships. However, without intending to create a hierarchy of suffering, we have, after multiple readings of the interview transcripts, chosen for this paper three accounts which contain adversities that are somewhat distinctive: one discusses bereavement and consequent economic hardship at a very young age; another cites unlawful termination of employment; and the third, a combination of bereavement and illness occurring simultaneously with international migration. Our engagement with some key elements of each narrative will be followed by a discussion of the themes that emerge.

ROSEMARY WHITAKER

Rosemary was 65 years old at the time of the interview, married, with two adult sons and grandchildren. She had retired from one of Bangalore's prestigious missionary schools but is employed part-time as an educational consultant to an elite boarding school about four hours from Bangalore. She spends three days a week there mentoring younger teachers.

Rosemary grew up the only sister in a family of five brothers. Her father's unsuccessful attempts at finding steady employment took them to many cities before

the family settled in Mysore. Consequently her schooling was patchy and irregular. Moreover, her father's "fondness for the bottle", as she puts it, depleted the family's meagre resources. By the age of nineteen Rosemary found herself more or less destitute, her two older brothers having left home, her mother having died and her father descending into alcoholism. With the help of an older brother and a family priest she found a place in Good Shepherd's Teacher Training College in Bangalore and admitted her younger brothers into an orphanage school nearby; while her efforts were essential to making this happen, the help she received from her brother and the priest were equally so, and indicate how embedded she was in family and community.

I found it difficult coming from Mysore, you know. A Karnataka State Board background... I really strived to get through. I had family matters to take care of and I was emotionally starved because I lost my mother. And here I was trying to mother a little boy [her young brother]. He was a rebel. So that was really an achievement to do my training.

For a young woman barely twenty-one, Rosemary showed great initiative, completing her training and finding a job in a prestigious school in Bangalore, though again, this was on the recommendation of a relative, extending her obligations to family. Her first earnings (less than 200 Rupees per month in 1971) went to her family, for the siblings. However, her subsequent marriage required her to resign and follow her husband in his naval career. Her two children were born and four years later the family resettled in Bangalore. Financial troubles and the strains of married life often weighed her down but Rosemary found a job in a small primary school run by the church and gained great satisfaction from her work there.

My life in the kindergarten was very fulfilling. And it helped me deal with a lot of personal problems, because by the time I went home, whatever seemed so overwhelming in the morning just melted to almost nothing, or you were able to look at it from a different angle once you went home.

Although Rosemary enjoyed her Teacher Training Certificate Course and learned a great deal, she is largely a self-taught teacher, innovative and experimental, using different methods, stories, songs and mnemonics to teach her students. Throughout the interview she would break into song to demonstrate this.

I thank God for the gift [of a loud voice] he has given me. I feel I should use these gifts, my singing ... storytelling is another passion of mine, which, where I feel that, er, children should not look at the book when

I'm telling a story. ... I use my hands and my mouth for getting across what I want, and I get, say, ninety five, ninety six percent attention from the children.

With her obligations to family continuing to shape her professional life, Rosemary augmented her income by selling books and educational material (her clientele included the parents of her students). When the school principal tried to forbid this supplementary activity on the grounds that it put the school in an embarrassing position, she responded,

Sister, you nuns taught us [when we were in training] to take care of ourselves, you know, not be a burden to others, to stand on our feet. And what am I doing? I am working hard to see that my two sons finish their education.

Rosemary's display of defiance in this situation was a risk, given that she was dependent on the school for an income even though it was not enough for her family's aspirations.

After teaching in the primary school for eighteen years Rosemary resigned since her husband found a job outside Bangalore but unfortunately he changed his mind and the school refused to employ her again at the same salary. "[They said] I'll get a beginners' salary. So I said 'if I am going to start as a fresher I might as well start somewhere else'".

She applied to the prestigious missionary school where she had started her career. Given her experience, her innovative teaching methods and performance in their written test, she got the job and eventually rose to the position of headmistress of the primary school. Although she faced some hostility from colleagues who also wanted the promotion, Rosemary won them over by exercising her authority judiciously. When she retired, she was offered the consultant's position that she now has and by her description seems to be popular amongst colleagues in her new school. Although she acknowledges that she has had a tough life, with the early death of her mother, trying to bring up her younger brothers and dealing with disappointments in her married life, Rosemary asserts, "God has been good to me and life has been good also!"

SANDRA HAYES

Sandra Hayes, who is 55 years old, is married with one daughter and has her own educational consultancy. Sandra grew up in Kolar Gold Fields as the second of eight children. Her father was employed in a mining company and her mother was a home-maker. Although fairly good at her studies, Sandra failed her pre-university (12th standard) board exams and felt deeply dejected. Rather than remain at home waiting to re-take her exams, she decided to move to Bangalore, against her father's wishes, to seek employment and augment the family's income; paradoxically, she defied family in order to help them. So in 1977, aged 17, with the help of a nun who was a former teacher she found a job as an untrained assistant teacher in a Christian school in Bangalore, earning about 150 rupees a month.

I paid hostel fees, I sent money home, for the younger ones to be looked after, whatever extras they wanted. I had money for myself, I travelled home once a week and whenever I went, I was like Santa Claus. I would take so many things from here.

Over time Sandra completed her graduation via correspondence, got married, and had a baby. She began her B.Ed (also by correspondence). When her infant daughter fell ill before her B.Ed exams Sandra decided to take the exams without preparation and to her own surprise passed with a first class. This gave her confidence to mentor other teachers who were doing a B.Ed. Seeing her enthusiasm, the school principal encouraged and paid for Sandra to attend various professional development workshops which became the foundation of her present role in teacher training.

On one occasion, however, Sandra defied his authority, refusing to attend an AIDS awareness workshop on the grounds that it was against her religious views to teach young people to use condoms (a standard prevention practice advocated by many AIDS-Awareness programmes in the 1980s). Sandra's account suggests that this bold expression of agency paradoxically won the principal's appreciation and they came to a compromise: she agreed to attend the workshop on the understanding that she could leave mid-way if it contradicted her religious views. As it turned out, the workshop was based on biblical teachings and she not only completed it but trained other teachers to conduct similar workshops for their students.

She suffered frequent illnesses which made it difficult for her to teach large classes, so Sandra accepted a job at a prestigious international school where student numbers were small enough to manage with her health problems. She had just begun to enjoy the job when her services were suddenly terminated without warning. As she wrestled with shock and a deep sense of humiliation Sandra's health again deteriorated. However she was determined that no other teacher should suffer such fate. Sandra took her former employers to court fighting a hard battle for nine years till the case was settled in her favour.

My lawyer said, 'You have to be compensated.' I said, 'That I leave to you. You do what you want about the compensation.' My idea was that teachers must have justice. Already we are being penalized because we don't have, er, enough salary, we are the lowest paid with the highest stress jobs, and on top of that if you are going to just terminate people, just like that, for no rhyme or reason, then it's going to be bad. And I know that many schools in Bangalore were looking at the case. Today any teacher being terminated can just quote the case. And I'm, I'm liberally giving details to anybody. And I say, *no teacher should go through what I went through* [her emphasis].

Over time, with support from friends, Sandra began to hold professional development workshops for teachers, students and college lecturers. As word spread about her unique teaching methods, workshop requests poured in. The principal of a small school of first generation English speakers called her in desperation one month before the high school board exams saying that all his students were at risk of failing. Sandra coached them for three days in the use of graphic organizers for organizing and memorizing facts. A month later the principal called. His first words were "Congratulations. I have got 98% pass. [98% of his students had passed the exam]" Sandra recounts.

My hair still stands on end when I think of that. It was amazing. ... He said, 'This is proof that your method works. Please take it to more schools. If it can work with my children, it can work with anyone.'

Over the years Sandra has created a thriving consultancy business which employs three other teachers and services about thirty five educational institutions. She sees all this as part of a divine plan.

Losing my job was his plan. He wanted me to reach out probably to more people instead of being stuck in one school. But of course it has given me another dimension where I can help teachers who are going through these kinds of problems. I know what it is to go to court, I know

how humiliating it is to stand there and just see the opponent's lawyer come in and say, 'Adjournment,' 'Adjournment,' 'Adjournment.' I've been through it for nine years. Been tough. But the satisfaction is there. Today I know that I can help someone who's in trouble. So HE has taken me through different phases, right through and here where I am now.

LAURA DE MELLO

Laura, the daughter of a railway employee is the seventh in a family of nine siblings. She was sixty eight at the time of the interview. Since her father's job took him to remote railway cantonments, she and her siblings lived with their mother in Bangalore and attended a convent school in the cantonment. Laura continued in the same school until her teacher training. Her older siblings took up different occupations: nursing, missionary work and railway employment. Over time several of them migrated to Australia.

Laura's account of her childhood and early years in teaching after the completion of her teacher training at Good Shepherd convent repeatedly mentions her teachers, many of whom were Anglo-Indians. The students and teachers of the school seem to have come from a very close-knit community which was resident in and around Bangalore cantonment and worshiped at the same church. Consequently there was a lot of interaction between them both within and outside school.

Miss Stevens, imagine she taught my mother as a little girl, and she taught me and later on I became her co-worker. We both handled Standard 6 together.

Another former teacher who became a co-worker, Mrs. Pat Jones (a pseudonym), had been close friends with Laura's family. Later she and the childless Mrs. Jones were to share a home until the latter's death.

After her training Laura, then aged nineteen, took up a job in a small school on the other side of the cantonment teaching children from less privileged backgrounds who did not speak English at home. To a teenager who was used to walking to school and church every day travelling by bus even for a few kilometres seemed daunting. Although the job was rewarding in terms of the affection of her pupils, Laura soon found a position in her alma mater and came back to work amongst her former teachers. As a primary school teacher she taught all the subjects except physical

education and Hindi (the second language offered at the school); however, she excelled in Geography, Mathematics and English.

Sanchia: You were saying that you had a lot of work to do at home.

Laura: Right, that's the teaching profession. We were very meticulous. You know, when it came to corrections. We'd look out for every spelling error and every comma and every full stop. That's the kind of teachers we were. There had to be a certain standard. We didn't accept shoddy work. ...

Sanchia: And when you were teaching geography, what kind of techniques did you use?

Laura: It was always collection of pictures and their geography books used to compete with one another. And those who were artistic, we'd allow them to draw and colour. They loved map work. Of course, I used to also take a lot of trouble to get additional information from the library, you know, not only what was in the textbook. I was telling you, that pupil who I met in the shops recently, she was rattling off all that I had taught her in geography. [laughs]

Similar details of the day-to-day labour of teaching were recounted by nearly all interviewees with a similar sense of pride. In a latter part of the interview, Laura recounts how she was recently accosted on the road by an unknown woman in a burkha who claimed she needed her (Laura) to teach in her school. I said, "No, I can't come." I don't know who she is. "We want you, we want you people with skirts" [she said], "Come and teach in our school." The woman's insistence on hiring 'people with skirts' indicates the high regard in which Bangalore's Anglo-Indian teachers are held.

After a few years Laura earned enough to emigrate to Australia. "I didn't want to ask my parents to sponsor me", she said with pride. In Australia she worked at small parish schools in Port Headland and Perth where she had family but living with siblings proved impractical and she lived alone for the first time. At first teaching was pleasurable and rewarding (the student numbers being much lower than in India was one reason for this) but unfortunately the local authorities decided to implement 'open area schools' with multiple grades within the same room which she repeatedly describes as "very nerve wracking". Although she had good relationships with colleagues, living away from Bangalore's close-knit Anglo-Indian community in a

more impersonal society as well as her mother's death, which closely followed her migration, affected her emotional health.

Already I was staying alone in a flat which I am not used to. If you don't have family, you can be very lonely, you know. And that told on my health, because I was so homesick ...to see my mother die of cancer and that's forty years ago. Then the home was broken up and etc., etc. My health gave up.

In 1976 Laura returned to India while her father migrated to Australia. Due to her health problems she was advised not to stay alone. Her siblings in Australia were unable to offer the care she required and she could not work. Her elderly friends, the Jones', took her in. "Mrs Jones got me back on my feet because of her love. She opened her doors to me". After recovering her health Laura found a job in an Anglo-Indian school and remained there for several years until an opening came up in her old convent. Staying with an elderly couple required some adjustments especially as their health began to fail. "There were times when I used to feel very frustrated, very upset because of the big age gap. But God gives us strength and courage. No matter how difficult things [are]".

Laura helped Mrs. Jones nurse her ailing husband until his death and later attended to Mrs. Jones in her last years. Now retired from active teaching, she continues to live in the Jones' house which has been inherited by their nieces and nephews. She would love to emigrate to Australia again to be close to her sisters. "But it's all left in the hands of the Lord."

EXERCISING AGENCY WITHIN CONSTRAINTS

The Choice to Teach

Many interviewees were obliged to help their parents sustain large families of four or more siblings. Earning an income was essential and only two interviewees' families could afford to pay for higher education. The TTC enabled them to enter the profession in their teens. Like Sandra and Rosemary many migrated from smaller towns while still in their teens to gain qualifications and find jobs. Others migrated within India after their training, to seek new experiences or better paying jobs. Although forced to return, Laura views her experience of international migration as enriching.

Gender played a major role in their choice of occupation. As Jackie Kirk (2008) argues, even when it is presented as an individual decision, the choice to teach is based on family or societal expectations, ideas about women's supposedly innate nurturing abilities and a need to gain a respectable position in society. Importantly, since many interviewees were very young on entering paid employment, their parents saw schools as a safe space in which to work away from the predatory male gaze to which many Anglo-Indian women were subjected. But since many obtained their first jobs through friends in the community, their negotiations of wages and terms of employment were constrained by social norms around gender, age and seniority.

Personal Incomes and Family Responsibilities

Several interviewees indicated that financial self-sufficiency was valued in their homes; all earned for their families and many continued to support their parents after marrying while also spending on their children. In this respect, the older interviewees are distinct from other south Indian communities of their generation but closer to non-Anglo-Indian women of the post-economic liberalization generations who earn for their natal and marital families (see Belliappa, 2013). Yet interviewees rarely negotiated salaries. Jane Andrews, an interviewee, remark that "whatever salary they gave us, we took it. There was no use of grumbling", which indicates resigned acceptance of the situation. However, her subsequent remarks suggest that poor pay is connected with gender. "Mr S, [the principal] felt we had husbands, as a backup. So somehow he never gave me that push [opportunity] to teach the high school [which is associated with higher salary]."

Often interviewees were not given positions of responsibility associated with better pay due to the management's gendered assumptions about their economic needs or family situations. Rosemary's narrative indicated that she took a firm stand when the management tried to curtail her sources of supplementary income but this exercise of agency did not extend to negotiating for better wages. Ruth Colaco, another interviewee, suggests that missionaries did not always understand the expenses of running a household:

When you saw teachers in other schools getting more... you felt a bit cheated, but the more teachers told the Sisters about it, the less they seemed to understand. See, they stay inside [the convent], they get their food and shelter without having to pay for anything.

As one key informant conveyed to us, although the Council requires affiliate (private) schools to match salaries to government schools it does not have resources to closely monitor wages paid by the schools. Interviewees often complained that they were paid lower than government school teachers.¹⁰ This could be attributed to the absence of university degrees (government school teachers usually have a B.Ed). However, as we have seen in the narratives, teachers continue to develop their skills over the course of their career, finding innovative ways to teach. Unfortunately salary structures based on formal qualifications do not recognise teachers' initiatives in professional development and commitment to students' success.

There is no uniformity in wages although most schools take into consideration qualifications and experience (years of service). Those who began teaching in the 1960s started with about Rs.60 to 75 per month (equivalent to about Rs.2,307 to Rs.2,884 in the year 2010); for those who began teaching in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this figure increases to Rs. 100 or at best Rs. 200 (Rs.2,105 to about Rs. 4,210 in 2010).¹¹ The low wages can in part be attributed to the fact that all teachers who started their careers in this period were high school graduates with either a TTC or no college education.

By the 21st century, teachers were earning between Rs.5,000 and Rs. 12,000 a month depending on qualifications and experience. Private school teachers are now paid much better (thanks to the improving norms of the Council which are influenced by government policies on wages) and starting salaries could be as high as Rs.15,000 per month in 2010 (approximately US\$ 330 by official conversion rate but by \$1023 dollars by PPP conversion ratio)¹² for a teacher with a TTC. This figure is still lower than the potential wages of high school graduates with fluency in English in the business process outsourcing or telemarketing industry indicating the low status of teaching in comparison to other white collar professions. Many teachers supplemented their income with tuitions as and when their family responsibilities permitted.

Negotiations with Management

With no collective bodies to represent them, teachers faced with unfair practices can only accept the situation or protest individually. Sandra's initiative of taking legal action in this regard is exceptional and as her narrative indicates, strongly motivated by her commitment to the profession. Since unionization is strongly discouraged, teachers support each other informally. Two interviewees, Annie Franz and Georgiana Alponso, who both had cancer while in service, found immense support from colleagues. In spite of their limited incomes, Georgiana's colleagues took a bank loan to help her during her recovery and extended various forms of care, bringing her food and taking over her lessons. They collectively exercised agency to mitigate the management's refusal to extend either financial help or long-term medical leave during Georgiana's illness. Patricia Hughes cites a similar instance.

I met with an accident and that time [the principal] wouldn't give me leave. And I couldn't lift my hand to write, [another colleague] would write the notes for me on the board. ... [The principal] said, 'You just have to come to school.' I used to put a plastic packet on my leg and somehow hobble, come to school. I couldn't sit, so the boarders used to bring pillows [for me to sit on].

Management decisions about the number of children admitted make teachers' professional lives particularly difficult. Each grade is divided into sections. As demand for English education increased in the 1970s and 80s, schools admitted more children, resulting in an average of 60 to 70 children per section. The 2010 Right to Education (RTE) Act restricts pupil teacher ratios to 30:1 and while schools do not strictly follow this norm, student numbers per section at each grade level have reduced since its implementation). However, this legislation might not necessarily have a positive effect on teachers' workload, as they might teach multiple sections at each grade level. Although numbers of students taught have a direct bearing on teachers' workload (in terms of preparation, marking and grading) they have no opportunity to negotiate this with management.¹³ Before RTE norms were enforced many interviewees often corrected (marked) over a hundred lessons a week and carry student notebooks home in a race to grade them before the next lesson, which is considered good pedagogical practice.

The Christian Ethic of Service and Attitudes to Teaching

As has been found in earlier ethnographies (Andrews, 2005; Caplan, 2001) many Anglo-Indians are deeply religious. Nearly all interviewees evinced a strong sense of faith which brought them great solace in times of difficulty. Retired interviewees are particularly active church members, who attend weekly or daily prayers, participate in Bible study groups, and seeking spiritual guidance from religious authorities. Their narratives suggest that faith enables them to view personal and professional setbacks as a result of a divine plan, strengthening their belief that resolution will come in time. In addition they invoked religious vocabulary to describe their commitment to teaching.

I think it comes naturally [to me] to deal with children, to talk to them, to explain to them, help them to understand. It's a God-given talent. Some people are born with it. (Carole Brown)

So it's a calling for me to be a teacher, [just as] it's a calling to be a nurse, everyone cannot be a nurse, you are called to it... And that's the belief we have, that God calls us to whatever we are doing, so we do our best. And once the calling came... there's just no question of regrets. (Georgiana Alponso)

Rosemary mentions her commitment to using her talents to serve children while Sandra suggests that even the trauma of losing her job helped her reach out to more children and teachers. Almost universally, interviewees claim that teaching is a vocation rather than a profession. Since monetary rewards are limited, it is impossible to enjoy the job unless motivated by a higher purpose, either dictated by the Christian ethic of service or love of children. The notion of service enjoins high commitment to professional responsibilities evidenced in teachers' painstaking work of planning, conducting and marking lessons.

The feminine ethic of care (Gilligan, 1982) merging with the Christian ethic of service creates a strong sense of dedication and deep commitment to teaching that makes Anglo-Indian teachers highly employable despite changing educational standards and practices. However, when teaching ability is seen as a 'natural' or 'in-born' it can de-value the teacher's efforts and training and justify poor pay. Moreover, the teachers' sense of dedication itself makes them vulnerable to exploitation, while paradoxically also enabling them to enjoy their jobs, take pride in their achievements and their relationships with students.

CONCLUSION

While it could be argued that a sense of God's provenance or acceptance of God's will could lead to a fatalistic attitude to life and erode individual initiative, we see considerable evidence of initiative in interviewees' accounts. Many migrated from provincial towns and cities to Bangalore to acquire jobs or teacher training qualifications (three of them also migrated internationally for better prospects). In particular our older interviewees (those over fifty years of age), paved the way for more women (Anglo-Indian or otherwise) to enter the profession since they began teaching in the 1960s and 1970s before women from other Indian communities took up white collar employment in large numbers.

However, given their entry into the job market at a fairly young age, this agency and initiative was constrained by gender, community and religious identities. Since the jobs available to them in the 20th century were in minority institutions governed by fellow church members or community leaders, they were unable to negotiate contracts and terms of employment in an individualistic and impersonal manner but imitations placed on teachers' agency by management was often mitigated by the generous support of colleagues.

It is noteworthy that women's agency was exercised more often for family than for self, as in the case of Rosemary who not only worked to support her younger brothers, but in the latter part of her life stood up to the school management in order to earn a better income for her children. Even Sandra who fought a legal case for fair treatment from her employers constructs her story in terms of representing 'teachers' rights' rather than as an individual battle. The 'collective' is often present in women's individual accounts, whether this collective represents the Anglo-Indian community, the teaching profession or the family.

Jackie Kirk's (2008) argument that teaching is viewed as an extension of women's 'natural' ability to care for and nurture young children can be extended via the narratives discussed here: Anglo-Indian teachers' sense of calling in their professions can be said to be a double edged sword, enabling them to find deep

satisfaction in their work but also requiring of them a commitment that is not rewarded monetarily due to two interrelated reasons: a societal devaluation of teachers' work and the unwillingness of school managements to move beyond a salary structure based on formal qualifications towards one that recognizes commitment to work. A (religious) calling is generally believed to be rewarded in spiritual rather than in worldly terms and could be used to rationalize poor pay or working conditions; indeed some teachers justify it in this manner in their accounts. Unfortunately this construction of teaching as a calling trivializes the time and effort spent on training for the job and enables society (including school boards) to undervalue teachers' work.

In spite of the limited recognition of their daily labour which contributes to nation building via the education of future generations, Anglo-Indian teachers find tremendous satisfaction in their relationships with students and colleagues (also occasionally with their superiors). We found interviewees to be, on the whole, genuinely satisfied with their careers and proud of their achievements, and those of their schools and pupils. Particularly important to this satisfaction is not just the sense of a job well done but also resilience in the face of difficulties. This resilience arose partly from religiosity but also out of the strong sense of independence and self-determination that every interviewee evidenced. It can be argued that this quest for self-determination whilst being embedded in family responsibilities, community ties and loyalties to employers, is a very significant aspect of Anglo-Indian femininity.

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NOTES

¹ English language schooling in this paper refers to schooling where English is the primary medium of instruction for all academic subjects while the national language, Hindi or the vernacular language of the state (in this case Kannada) is taught as a second or third language.

² Theoretically speaking relationships between European women and Indian men (especially if they were noble men) might have been acceptable in the early stages of imperialism when trade was the main priority and could also have contributed to the emergence of the community. However, it is unlikely that such unions occurred in significant numbers, given that European women began arriving on the subcontinent in only the nineteenth century, when racial boundaries were being much more tightly drawn.

³ The constitution provides for two members of the Anglo-Indian community to be nominated to parliament to represent the interests of the community on a national level.

⁴ For a longer discussion on the establishment of missionary schools see S. Muthiah, 2014 and Muthiah and MacLure, 2013.

⁵ For more details please see Janaki Nair's book on Bangalore which is in the references.

⁶ Reading, (W)riting and (A)rithmetic

⁷ An excellent elucidation of the Anglo-Indian teacher's devotion to detail and commitment to her profession may be found in Wendy M Dickson's obituary of her mother Rose Dickson which is based on the letters of her former students (see Dickson, 2010)

⁸ For a discussion of Anglo-Indians' contribution to business process outsourcing see Upamanyu Sengupta's 2016 article in this journal

⁹ Before interviews, power often rests with interviewees (to accept or refuse to participate for instance, while after interviews the power of representation rests with researchers and needs to be carefully deployed. During the interviews, power shifts between interviewers and interviewees. Since we were considerably younger than our interviewees they often addressed us (especially Sanchia) as "my girl", a term used for a junior member of the community and family, or offered advice on marriage and motherhood, underlining their seniority. However they also tended to bring up our formal (postgraduate) qualifications and association with university teaching to suggest that we had expertise that they lacked. For an in-depth discussion see deSouza and Belliappa (forthcoming).

¹⁰ Government school teaching jobs were largely unavailable to Anglo-Indian teachers due to their poor command over Kannada and other vernacular languages (which are the medium of instruction in government schools).

¹¹ Figures calculated using the consumer price index (Rs.2.58 in 1960 would be equivalent to Rs100 in the year 2010; while Rs 4.75 would be equivalent to Rs100 in 1970). Consumer Price Index reflects the changing costs of goods and services. Source: International Monetary Fund, International Financial Statistics and data files accessed via The World Bank's World Development Indicators page: (<http://data.worldbank.org/country/india?view=chart>).

¹² Purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion factor is the number of units of a country's currency required to buy the same amounts of goods and services in the domestic market as U.S. dollar would buy in the United States. Source: International Monetary Fund, International Financial Statistics and data files accessed via The World Bank's World Development Indicators page: (<http://data.worldbank.org/country/india?view=chart>).

¹³ Recent legislation, the Right to Education Act 2010, limits the teacher pupil ratio to 1:30 and while school do routinely flout this norm, the numbers are no longer as high as they were in the 1970s and 80s.

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