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## SOLIDARITY OF ANGLO-INDIANS IS STILL THE QUESTION

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### INTRODUCTION

In this essay I address the efforts by Anglo-Indians to build solidarity and strength as a community, both historically and in recent times. The question of Anglo-Indian solidarity is especially relevant currently, as the last five years have brought a legal challenge to the Community's recognition, representation and benefits as a minority in modern India. This is not the first challenge faced by the community; for such contestations of rights for the mixed-race Anglo-Indians dates back to prescriptive rulings of the East India Company in the late eighteenth century. The present moment is critical, however, and a topic to which I can speak particularly because of my history of leadership of Anglo-Indian organisation for many years and having served in recent years as a nominated Member of Parliament representing Anglo-Indian interests. In this article I argue that a persistent problem of Anglo-Indians has been the community's disunity and failure to make good use of opportunities for solidarity that have both been provided legally and have been created by the initiatives by Anglo-Indians themselves, over many generations. Besides sharing my insights into past failures and triumphs, I sketch out the community's response to the Constitutional amendment in 2020 which removed Anglo-Indian representation in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies, and suggest a way forward to provide for the good of the Community.

### HISTORICAL ORIGINS

What is now called the "Anglo-Indian" community came into being when Europeans, from the earliest period of Portuguese colonization and in subsequent colonial regimes

(French, Dutch, English), formed relationships with Indian women or women of the existing mixed-race communities in and around colonial ports, trading cities and military outposts. Over the centuries the community has gone by various names. This community, first known as *Feringhi* (foreigner in Indian vernacular) and thereafter as 'Eurasian' or 'East Indian', was defined and named as 'Anglo-Indian' first in the 1911 census, then in the Government of India Act 1935 and later after Independence included in Article 366 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of India (1950). 'Anglo-Indian' endures as the name of this Community.

After an early period of general favour by colonial authorities towards this community of mixed heritage, a fear of its growing numbers animated a number of proscriptive rulings by the East India Company. Through the rest of the colonial period the Community's regard by the British colonial state ebbed and flowed, based on the degree to which the British thought the community could be helpful at protecting their interests. Meanwhile various initiatives from within the community consolidated a collective identity, advocated for legal recognition, and generated by the late nineteenth century various associations of Anglo-Indians across the country, many of which amalgamated in the early twentieth century. The community's origins had much to do with service in the East India Company's military, and yet Anglo-Indians were banned from arms-bearing military service by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. An openness to reverse this began to emerge after the Indian Rebellion of 1857, when Anglo-Indians came to be considered potentially useful again in military service. At the time of the First World War Anglo-Indian writer, Herbert Alick Stark drew on this martial heritage to call for Anglo-Indian service once again, in his book *The Call of the Blood* (Stark, 1932). Anglo-Indians did see much more widespread military, and para-military (AFI), service during the Second World War. But the burgeoning infrastructure of India from the mid-nineteenth century – railways, post & telegraph services, for example – also became lines of employment where Anglo-Indians found a home, even though they were frequently discriminated against and denied opportunities of legitimate promotion because of their racial identity. The railways in particular came to be the largest single employer of Anglo-Indians, resulting in an almost indelible association between the Community and this key institution and infrastructure in India.

## ANGLO-INDIAN ORGANISATIONS

Organising the Anglo-Indian community began long before the first Association was established, as the fruit of a community burdened and stifled by being prevented from going to England for education, from serving as soldiers and officers in the military, an ambiguous legal status, and restrictions on their property rights. By the 1820s they joined together in solidarity to advocate for the Community collectively. In all three Presidencies – Bombay, Madras and Calcutta – petitions were drafted and sent to Parliament for redress of their grievances.

John William Ricketts, was a Eurasian luminary and leader of the Community in Calcutta. In a 1825 meeting of the “East Indians” (as the community was called in those days) it was decided to petition the British Parliament concerning the grievances of the community. A committee was formed to draft the petition. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, the young poet by that time roused the feelings and enthusiasm of “East Indians” by his poetical narrations. Derozio has a unique place in the history of the European descendants as his writings played upon the feelings of his community and resulted in their coming together in raising voice against the British who were discriminating his community and for protecting their rights (Anthony, 1969, p. 61; Dias, 2019, pp. 86-87; Stark, 1932, pp. 95,96,105). In 1828 Ricketts formed the Commercial and Patriotic Association for providing training to Anglo-Indians to engage in agriculture, trade and commerce (Anthony, 1969, p. 47). In 1829 Ricketts arrived in London and presented the petition to the House of Lords through Lord Carlisle (Anthony, 1969, p. 48; Dias, 2019, p. 87). As a result of this petition a clause was inserted in the Charter Act of 1833 proclaiming that all persons without reference to their place of birth or colour were eligible for Civil and Military Services of the Government (Anthony, 1969, p. 52).

A new era of organizing came about in the late nineteenth century with the advent of Associations, a characteristic of Anglo-Indian public life that has endured for the last century and a half. The Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association established in Bengal by E.W. Chambers on December 16, 1876 was a first and a milestone in Anglo-Indian history (Anthony, 1969, p. 2; Dias, 2019, p. 89). In 1898 Dr. J.R. Wallace founded the Imperial Anglo-Indian Association (Dias, 2019, p. 89). The Anglo-Indian and Domiciled

European Association of Southern India founded in 1879 by D.S. White was involved in politics and was noteworthy (Dias, 2019, p. 90). It was his desire to have a township for Anglo-Indians in the suburbs of Bangalore and he managed to get 3,900-acre land from King Chamraja Wodeyar IX, the Maharaja of Mysore, for the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association in 1882 for the establishment of an agricultural settlement.

The first two decades of the twentieth century were a period of distress, particularly as Anglo-Indians had to compete with all Indians for many of the government jobs that had prior to 1919 (Montague Chelmsford Reforms). In need of a strong leader, Sir Henry Gidney entered the scene (Anthony, 1969, p. 87). It was his farsightedness to bring together various Anglo-Indian organisations into one block that could offer more strength and a unified voice. How he achieved this was by going around the country to meet leaders of the various Anglo-Indian organisations and convince them of the need for unity in order to argue for and claim their legitimate rights from the British authorities. He was able to bring together most of the active organisations of that time and to present the grievances of the Anglo-Indian community.<sup>1</sup> In 1926, the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association, Bengal changed its name to the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association - All-India and Burma (Dias, 2019, p. 98). Building upon this greater unity and collective voice, Gidney sought to be the representative of Anglo-Indian interests in the midst of turbulent anti-colonial nationalism. He brought the Anglo-Indian voice to the table through his mission to London in 1925 to meet the British authorities, his arguments before the Simon Commission (1928) and consequently in the three sessions of the Round Table Conferences (1930-32) (Anthony, 1969, pp. 100-104). His meetings with King George V and the Lords resulted in obtaining support for the cause of Anglo-Indians and had positive impacts. The definition of the community in the Govt. of India Act 1935,<sup>2</sup> the nomination of representative of the community in Central Legislative Assembly and then in the Constituent Assembly, exemplify the results of Sir Henry Gidney's efforts on behalf of the well-being of the Anglo-Indian community as one of India's many minorities. These contributions are generally heralded as laying the groundwork and securing the well-being for the Anglo-Indian community for the future. But perhaps, the greatest achievement of Sir Henry Gidney was that he could unify many of the then functioning Anglo-Indian organisations into an All-India organisation, which is what we now know of as the All-India Anglo-Indian Association (AIAIA).<sup>3</sup>

Frank Anthony, who replaced Gidney in leadership of the AIAIA, managed to convince Congress leadership in the waning years of British rule that Independent India should recognize Anglo-Indians as a separate minority with certain protections. No doubt, his capabilities and efforts secured several advantages for the Anglo-Indian community in Independent India. But his negative attitude towards Anglo-Indians in several Southern states can be considered unreasonable and the proximate cause for the formation of independent Anglo-Indian organisations in several States.<sup>4</sup>

While Gidney was amalgamating Anglo-Indian associations in the 1920s, D.S. White remained separate with his Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association of Southern India, which also failed to attract a broad representation of Anglo-Indians in its membership. In some people's view, due to the self-centered attitude of its later office bearers, a large section of the community steered clear of the AIAIA. In 1952 when Andrew Antony Daniel Luiz (A.A.D. Luiz) an affluent law graduate who proved his ability as an effective leader and MLA, with several achievements to the community to his credit, tried for nomination to Parliament, Frank Anthony came out with a theory that the Portuguese descendants are not real Anglo-Indians but only '*Feringhies*'. At the same time Frank Anthony had praised the Luiz family earlier and was entertained by this family earlier. In those days he used to praise them as 'merchant princes'. People who saw both Frank Anthony and A. A. D. Luiz can vouch that A.A.D. Luiz had the more European features and complexion! Chev. Paul Luiz, his father, formed the first Anglo-Indian Association in Cochin as early as 1922 and was a close associate of the Raja of Cochin. So also, Frank Anthony was not prepared to approve the French descendants from Pondicherry as Anglo-Indians.

#### INDEPENDENCE & CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR ANGLO-INDIANS

Following Indian Independence in 1947, the Constitution was drawn up and introduced in 1950. In the Constitution Anglo-Indians were defined in Article 366 (2), and provided with a number of advantageous provisions, including: continued job reservations in Central Services and Railways as per article 336; educational grants provided to Anglo-Indian schools as per Article 337; two nominated seats in the Lok Sabha were reserved as per Article 331; nominated seats were also reserved for Anglo-Indians in certain States with a significant number of Anglo-Indians as per Article 333. The job

reservations and the educational grants as per Article 336 and 337 were to be phased out and cease after ten years.

Frank Anthony and A.E.T. Barrow were the first two nominated Members to the Parliament of India. They worked together and presented matters such as the protection of English language, which was to be identified with the Anglo-Indians, and also raised several issues concerning the special status of Anglo-Indian schools managed by the Anglo-Indian community. According to Frank Anthony, the securing of nominations to Parliament, state legislatures, the educational grants, reservation of job quotas etc. are his achievements. No doubt, Frank Anthony was a towering personality. The Anglo-Indian community will be ever indebted to him as he had a long innings of service. He continued uninterruptedly until 1977 as Member of Parliament. In 1977, when the Janatha government was elected, Jose Fernandez and Paul Mantosh were nominated for just a short time. In 1980 Frank Anthony came back as an MP and continued until 1993.

#### ADVOCATING FOR ANGLO-INDIAN INTERESTS: ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

Hand in hand with the Constitutional provision of MPs and MLAs went the presumption of active local and regional associations of Anglo-Indians as well as a national body, the AIAIA. Through these associations' leaders the British government had dealt with the Community in the closing decades of colonial rule, and it was the organizing principle by as well by which leaders would rise in the Community to be nominated to serve as MPs and MLAs. But the strength and unity of these organisations, as well as just how representative they were, remained open questions and a source of disunity as much as of unity.

After Independence, in several States, independent organisations were established, mainly because of neglect from leaders of the central organisation and efforts to undermine representation from certain areas. The so-called central leadership failed to understand the real situation and the problems of Anglo-Indians in most of the areas. The independent organisations formed at this time included the Union of Anglo-Indian Associations (Kerala) formed in 1951 and registered in 1953; The Anglo-Indian Educational & Charitable Society, Kerala established in 1964; The All India

Progressive Anglo-Indian Social, Cultural, Educational and Economic Welfare Association (Bangalore) in 1972; Calcutta Anglo-Indian Service Society (CAISS) in 1976; The Anglo-Indian Guild, Bangalore formed in 1980; The Anglo-Indian Welfare Association, Hyderabad; The Anglo-Indian Association of Southern India, Egmore, Madras; The Anglo-Indian Association of Assam, Guwahati; The Anglo-Indian Association of Orissa, Khudra; The Anglo-Indian Association Faridabad, Haryana; The Ambernath Anglo-Indian Association, Maharashtra; The Anglo-Indian Suburban Front, Chennai; The Anglo-Indian Women's Forum, Chennai etc. The Central Board of Anglo-Indian Education, Kerala established in 1945. Recently, in 2020 at Hyderabad a New Anglo Community Association (Telangana) was formed with membership from around the city limits; the Anglo-Indian Community Association Andhra Pradesh was formed in 2021 with their headquarters at Vishakapattanam and branches at Vijayawada, Rajahmundry and Guntukal. Apart from all these, local groups of Anglo-Indians formed their own groups and organized welfare services and get-togethers for Anglo-Indians in the locality.

The AIAIA which claims to have 60 branches cannot claim that they represent the majority of Anglo-Indians in the country. According to the statistics collected by Blair Williams in 2000 only around 10% of Anglo-Indians in India are members of this organisation (Williams, 2002, p. 157). With Railway colonies withering and job reservations lost, the majority of these so-called branches became moribund. The Anglo-Indian & Domiciled European Association led by D.S. White since 1879 also lost its vigour and the later leaders could not retain the members. As a result, in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, etc. independent Anglo-Indian organisations were established and the majority of the community enrolled themselves in these organisations. Their leaders approached their respective Governments and secured reservations of seats for Anglo-Indians in professional colleges even though there were few seats in each course.<sup>5</sup> In Kolkata, the Calcutta Anglo-Indian Service Society (CAISS), focused largely on social welfare concerns, made a huge impact with their programmes to help Anglo-Indians in need – financially as well as the care of elderly people.<sup>6</sup>

As discussed, the early leaders of the Anglo-Indian community, first struggled for unification of the community, with the pioneers in those years being Herbert Alick

Stark, William Ricketts, J.R. Wallace and E.W. Chambers, who each had a prominent role. This early phase of struggle by Anglo-Indians occurred while the British was ruthlessly suppressing Indians and their demands for humanitarian consideration towards them. When the British Government was convinced that their rule in India was seriously threatened, the roles of Sir Henry Gidney and Frank Anthony were invaluable in their fight for the community's demands for consideration. D.S. White also played a prominent part in South India in the struggle to gain consideration for the community from the British. But his 'lonely' operation with his Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association of Southern India since 1879, and refusal to join with the leaders from other parts of the country, had a negative impact in the solidarity of Anglo-Indians in the national level.

Later, with the formation of the Anglo-Indian Association in Malabar at the initiative of Chev. Paul Luiz at Cochin in 1922, apparently in neighboring areas of Madras, Bangalore and adjacent States, Anglo-Indians gained confidence and started showing allegiance to some extent with the freedom movement and also organized themselves to form Associations. All over the country at most of the Railway Junctions and major Railway centers, Anglo-Indians formed their associations, and conducted meetings and dances in the Railway club auditoriums. Railway clubs were often the centre of Anglo-Indian social life those days. Life in railway centres also provided protection of their culture and language.

In West Bengal Ms. Philomena Eaton, as the long-serving convenor of the Calcutta Anglo-Indian Service Society (CAISS) made a mark in the service of the community. As mentioned earlier, after the formation of the Anglo-Indian Association at Cochin in 1922 by Chev. Paul Luiz, Lawrence Anthony Fullinfaw in Bangalore, Chev. C.J. Luiz, Stanly Luiz and Stephen Padua in Cochin, Chev. Denzil D'Monte in Madras, Joss Fernandez in Bangalore and Mrs. Christine Lazares in Hyderabad.<sup>7</sup> had already established independent Anglo-Indian Associations with beneficial services to the community such as fee concessions and reservation in Professional colleges for Anglo-Indians. The Association in Kerala was able to sanction twelve Anglo-Indian schools as early as 1945. Allotment of lands to Anglo-Indians for housing was yet another project in these States. As a result, Anglo-Indians in these States developed more confidence in their Associations and leaders than in the other parts of India



where with the end of job reservations in Railways and other Govt. Departments, severe un-employment and housing problems were experienced by Anglo-Indians. Their leaders could not attend to these problems.

Despite numerous associations and a number of charitable organisations such as CAISS, the community faced persistent problems exacerbated by the end of reservations, the migration of many Anglo-Indians to foreign countries, and a sort of cultural dilution as Anglo-Indians stopped living together in some of their traditional urban neighbourhoods and railway colonies.

The very existence of the Anglo-Indian community firmly rests on the cultural identity of the community. English language has arguably been the binding force of that cultural identity. Also, the style and way of life, to a very great extent, was instrumental in keeping the uniqueness of the community. With the three Frank Anthony Public Schools and the hundreds of Anglo-Indian Schools managed by Anglo-Indians (as well as the Church authorities and religious congregations) a large section of the community has been assisted in obtaining an education at least to the level of Matriculation. Higher education was a big challenge to many.

I found in my role as MP that the educational institutions established by Anglo-Indians and funded by them, and those managed by religious congregations, slowly started discriminating against Anglo-Indian students and some felt pushed out. As India has changed, access to higher education has become a necessary condition of higher incomes and better employment. Blame for the failure of some sections of the Anglo-Indian community to access these tools for financial success, and thriving culturally, lie partly with the disunity and lack of leadership among Anglo-Indians' collective expressions in associations and in politics. There are counter examples as well. For instance, I would assert that leaders of the Anglo-Indian community in Kerala foresaw the developing circumstances and, in an attempt to remedy the situation, established the Central Board of Anglo-Indian Education and started twelve Anglo-Indian schools as early as in 1945.<sup>8</sup> They also established institutions such as the Southern College of Engineering (Aeronautic) in 1955, the first one of its kind in South India.

## ROLES AND ACTIONS OF NOMINATED MPS AND MLAS

It is still a big question why, with two MPs in Parliament and twelve MLAs in various States, for seventy long years after Independence the Anglo-Indian community could not address vital problems like facilities for higher education, housing and taking suitable steps to protect their culture and language. This question deserves research.

Sir Henry Gidney and Frank Antony did their might in the most crucial days of Anglo-Indians, unparalleled in their history. In one step further, Frank Anthony provided a beautiful book on Anglo-Indians containing their history with several narrations on important and relevant aspects on the community and its organisations (Anthony, 1969). After Frank Anthony's term, in my opinion, the only Member who had a positive impact was Dr. Mrs. Beatrix D'Souza who was nominated during 13<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha in 1999. She travelled all around the country, met Anglo-Indians and offered her Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) funds wherever it could be utilized.<sup>9</sup>

In 2009 when I was nominated (15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) I made an effort to meet the Anglo-Indian leaders and called several meetings at Delhi and other places to hear their needs. As a result, I prepared a memorandum and submitted it to the President of India, the Prime Minister, and concerned Ministers. In it I drew attention to the requirement of homes for the homeless Anglo-Indians. In response, a special Order from the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation was issued in 2010 (D.O. No. 10415-D/AS & MD (JNNURUM) 2010 Dated May 12, 2010).

Later, my efforts were concentrated on approaching the Government to appoint a committee to study the socio-economic and educational situation of Anglo-Indians in the country. The socio-economic study was conducted by the Ministry of Minority Affairs in 2013, and the resulting directions issued as a report from the Ministry D.O. NO. 29-10//2013-SS Dated: the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014 represent a significant record. Due to this report, I could allocate funds to nine Anglo-Indian schools in Kerala, three other Christian schools, five community centres for Anglo-Indians and allocate computers to several schools and undertake hundreds of civil works such as roads, drainages, culverts and bridges wherever Anglo-Indians were staying and also in places they suggested.<sup>10</sup> Through my efforts, Higher Secondary course status was allocated to

the C.C.P.L.M. Anglo-Indian High School, at Perumanoor, Cochin. In addition, by combining with Latin Catholics, 1% seats in Professional courses were allocated for Anglo-Indians in Kerala.<sup>11</sup>

While A.A.D. Luiz and Stanley Luiz were MLAs in Kerala, they secured benefits for Anglo-Indians. Besides educational and job reservations, several acres of land were allotted to Anglo-Indians for housing colonies. This example was quoted by Chev. Denzil D'Monte at Tamilnadu, Joss Fernandez at Karnataka and Mrs. Christine Lazares at Andhra Pradesh and secured seat reservations for Anglo-Indians in their respective States. Mrs. Christine Lazares, in her role as MLA in Andhra Pradesh, secured more than 150 seats in Professional Institutions in various courses including Medicine, Engineering, Law, Computer sciences.<sup>12</sup> She was also instrumental in building Community Centres for Anglo-Indians in Andhra Pradesh. Christine Lazares could convince the Government of Andhra Pradesh that the Anglo-Indians were allocated seat reservation in professional colleges in Keala, Karnataka etc. and the government of Andhra Pradesh allocated these reserved seats by issuing about five Government Orders (GOs).

#### MY EFFORTS AS MP AND THEREAFTER

Drawing from my own experience as a nominated Member of Parliament since 2009, the disunity of Anglo-Indians was the main problem I faced. There were so many organisations for Anglo-Indians, but it was not clear what their requirements and demands were. As a person associated with activities of Anglo-Indian organisations for about forty long years, I had first-hand knowledge of the community in India and their requirements. One issue was that of the housing of Anglo-Indians, which was addressed by the Government and a Special Housing Scheme for Anglo-Indians was announced by the Ministry of Urban Poverty Alleviation in 2010 which I quoted earlier in this article.

As the representative of the community, I wanted to hear the views of the Anglo-Indian leaders and the nominated MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly). Several meetings were held with them during 2010 and 2011 and I appealed to the Government to entrust an officer in the Ministry of Minority Affairs to listen to the grievances of the Anglo-Indian community. After the meetings with Anglo-Indian

leaders and listening to their demands, memoranda were given to the President of India, Prime Minister and various Ministries of the Central Government concerning the requirements of the Anglo-Indian community. Considering my continuous appeals, the Honorable Minister for Minority Affairs was pleased to depute an officer in the Director rank in the Ministry who was given responsibility, as Nodal Officer for Anglo-Indians, to attend to the memoranda and requirements of the community.

A historic Anglo-Indian Convention was held at Delhi at my initiative as sitting MP, in the Constitution Club of India New Delhi on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2011. It was attended by Central Ministers, Members of Parliament, higher officials, nominated MLAs, Mr. Neil O'Brien as President-in-Chief of the All-India Anglo-Indian Association, office bearers of Anglo-Indian organisations from various States of the country and other prominent delegates. It was the aspiration of many who attended it that there should be an umbrella body for the whole Anglo-Indian community to come together. Several prominent delegates who attended this Convention raised this matter and determined to join forces to achieve it. This prompted me to call leaders of several Anglo-Indian organisations from various States and to discuss this issue. Meetings were held in Bangalore and in Delhi by Anglo-Indian leaders in order to work towards forming a national organisation to co-ordinate their activities. I had made it clear to the leaders that each organisation would have the right to retain their freedom to work independently and to keep their identity. Nominated MPs, Ex. MPs, MLAs and Ex. MLAs and leaders of Anglo-Indian organisations including that of the All-India Anglo-Indian Association took part in these discussions. After lengthy deliberations a draft bylaw was prepared and circulated among office bearers and leaders of various organisations for discussion in their respective Committees and to obtain their approval. I had discussions with Neil O'Brien, the then President-in-Chief of the AIAIA, on this draft bylaw. He suggested certain changes in the clauses which I brought to the consideration of the Drafting Committee. Finally, after considering and incorporating the suggestions of all, The Federation of Anglo-Indian Associations in India was formed in 2012 with its headquarters in Bangalore.<sup>13</sup> It was registered under the Societies Act in Karnataka with scope to function across the country of India. Unfortunately, for reasons known only to the leaders of the AIAIA, this organisation declined at the last minute from joining this Federation. This has to some extent adversely affected the aim of forming a united front which would have been in a better

position to approach the Central and State Governments with common demands for Anglo-Indians.

Since the formation of the Federation, associations from different parts of the country have joined and, as of 2024, seventeen Anglo-Indian organisations (both registered and unregistered) belong to the Federation of Anglo-Indian Associations. The structure is that branch organisations function under State organisations. The Federation has submitted memoranda to the Government on several problems the Anglo-Indian community is facing. In the memoranda submitted to the President and Prime Minister of India on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012, for example, the following points were included:

- a) Housing problems of Anglo-Indians.
- b) The requirement of Community Centers for Anglo-Indians.
- c) To provide positions and memberships for Anglo-Indians in various Govt. bodies.
- d) To establish an 'Anglo-Indian Desk' at the Ministry of Minority affairs to address the complaints and grievances of Anglo-Indians.
- e) To reserve seats for Anglo-Indian students in central Universities.
- f) To conduct enquiry on the properties earmarked/given by affluent Anglo-Indians to Bishops and Trusts for the welfare of Anglo-Indians.
- g) To declare Anglo-Indian community as an 'Ethnic and Linguistic Minority'.

After my continuous requests to the Ministry of Minority Affairs, a Fact-Finding Team was constituted, headed by Mr. Ninong Ering, Minister of State, to study the problems of the Anglo-Indian community and to suggest remedial measures. This team visited Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai and Cochin and other Anglo-Indian centers. They met nominated MLAs and leaders of the organisations, Bishops and other church leaders, after which they prepared a report which was published in 2013. In this report it was pointed out that:

It is observed that amongst the various challenges and problems being faced by members of the Anglo-Indian community in India; the more significant ones are related to (i) identity crisis, (ii) lack of employment, (iii) educational backwardness (iv) lack of proper housing facilities and (v) cultural erosion. (page No.7 of the Report)

The Minister, in his letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014, had written to all the States that the Government would see to the following for Anglo-Indian advancement:

- (1) To provide land to construct Community–cum–Skill Development Centers
- (2) To provide ‘Special Reservation of seats in professional institutions to Anglo-Indian students.
- (3) To allocate land/plots to implement housing scheme for Anglo-Indians
- (4) To upgrade schools established by Anglo-Indians

In my representative capacity I wrote to all the Anglo-Indian organisations, nominated MLAs and leaders with copies of the letters from Mr. Ninong Ering, Minister for State for Minority Affairs and Government Orders from Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh to advise that seats for Anglo-Indians in Professional colleges had been authorized, and that they should approach their respective Governments to securing such welfare measures. Even after my period as Member of Parliament was over, in 2014 I continued my efforts to pursue this matter through the Federation of Anglo-Indian Associations in India.

The Federation convened a Seminar at Bangalore on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2017 on ‘The Anglo-Indians and their Future’ which was attended by nominated MP Prof. Richard Hay and several leaders and delegates from various States. Mr. Gordon Maher, President of the International Federation of Anglo-Indian Associations (Perth), Dr. Robyn Andrews (New Zealand), Dr. Dolores Chew (Canada), and Prof. Blair Williams (U.S.A.) presented their views through their papers and Wg. Cdr. Nester de Concessao, Mr. Collin Timms and Mr. Colin Fitzgerald attended and presented their views. A ‘Vision Statement’ was also discussed and approved in this Seminar with a plan to strengthen the solidarity of Anglo-Indians through the following events and initiatives:

1. A biannual get-together of Anglo-Indian leaders to discuss the various issues of the Anglo-Indian community.
2. Annual Youth Meet at the national level to encourage youngsters of the community to present cultural shows and to discuss on problems of the youth and community.
3. To conduct music and cultural programmes and Anglo-Indian Food Festival.

4. To establish 'Community cum Skill Development Centre in Anglo-Indian concentrated areas for the community to meet together.
5. A Common newsletter to exchange news and views.
6. To cooperate with the International Federation of Anglo-Indian Associations for larger solidarity of the community.
7. To establish a Central Headquarters and a museum for the community to meet and to showcase their cultural identity.

Those involved, both associations and the individuals, felt hopeful about the future as a more united community, particularly under the leadership of the nominated MPs and MLAs. In the light of this, what I describe next was particularly devastating.

#### CHALLENGING & REVOCATION OF ANGLO-INDIAN REPRESENTATION, 2019

Without any prior warning, the Anglo-Indian reserved seats in the Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies of India were discontinued by the 126th Constitutional Amendment Bill of 2019, when enacted as the 104<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 2019. The withdrawal of representation was initiated on 9.12.2019, when Sri Ravi Shankar Prasad, the Honourable Minister of Law and Justice, Communications and Electronics and Information Technology, introduced the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty Sixth Amendment) Bill, 2019 before the Lok Sabha. The said Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on 10.12.2019, that is, within a day.

The reason the Minister for Law gave for the discontinuance, as stated in Parliament was that according to the Census of 2011, Anglo-Indians numbered only 296 in all of India, and they are well-off. Both the reasons contradicted the facts. The 126<sup>th</sup> Constitutional amendment, was therefore enacted without considering the real situation of Anglo-Indians, and without any scientific study of their population. The Government has acted with callous indifference towards this community which has been plunged into the precarious situation of having no government representation either in the Lok Sabha or state legislative assemblies. In both the Houses of Parliament, Members have objected to the endorsement of the act. Several memoranda and representations were presented to the President of India, the Prime Minister of India and other Ministers. A case against the action was filed by the Federation of Anglo-Indian Associations in India in Supreme Court and later the case

was shifted to the Delhi High Court. The one question in front of the Parliament and the Supreme Court is about the population of Anglo-Indians in the country.

This is the State-Wise Enumeration as quoted by the Government from Census report 2011:

West Bengal	9
Odisha	4
Chhattisgarh	3
Maharashtra	16
Andhra Pradesh	62
Karnataka	9
Kerala	124
Tamilnadu	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>

The Federation has collected the population figures and spread of Anglo-Indians in India through the constituent organisations. This is the data we received:

Distribution of the Anglo-Indian Population in India:

West Bengal	45,000
Assam	8,000
Chhattisgarh	5,000
Uttarakhand	5,000
Jharkhand	7,000
Utter Pradesh	15,000
Delhi	7,000
Haryana	5,000
Punjab	3,000
Madhyaparadesh	20,000
Maharashtra	25,000
Andhra	15,000
Telengana	20,000
Karnataka	45,000
Tamilnadu	42,000
Kerala	80,000



The total population is estimated to be 3,47,000 plus about 50,000 more who are scattered all over the country in other States and Union Territories including Goa.

#### COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ACT (2019)

When the nominations of Anglo-Indians to Parliament and State Legislatures were lost through the 104<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 2019, the response from the community was muted. Even though the national organisations attempted to plan big protests, the community at large was reluctant to come out and protest.

My impression is that after the initial years of Independence, our representatives in Parliament were more concerned about protecting their educational institutions and not so concerned about the educational and economic advancement of the community at large. They also seemed to have ignored the housing problems faced commonly by Anglo-Indians. While Anglo-Indians donated their lands and properties and good sums of money to churches and educational institutions, they were less motivated to ensure they had their own offices and community centres. Apart from the nominated MLAs from the South, MLAs seemed less bothered about securing welfare measures for the community. This issue was compounded by the process of ruling parties nominating MLAs of their choice, ignoring the leaders of the organisations who worked for the community. In many cases, the persons nominated lacked sufficient engagement with the community to have a full awareness of its problems or commitment to their amelioration.

#### CONCLUSIONS: A WAY FORWARD?

The only way forward is for the community is to come together and raise their demands in one voice. While maintaining the individuality of each organisation, it is surely possible to come together and discuss the common needs and concerns shared by the community as a whole. A yearly convention of representatives of organisations should be held, conducted in a different centre each year. A National Steering Committee could be formed. After discussing the shared issues of concern, letters and memoranda can be drafted and presented to the authorities concerned. Such issues to be raised would include: the need for continuing English in our schools; cultural events to be held annually; a 'Museum of Anglo-Indian Culture' to be set up.

We sadly missed the opportunity to use MPs and MLA funds, to the tune of about seventy crores rupees for community welfare schemes (2 MPs and 12 MLAs – 14 x 5 crores each = Rs70 crores. Each MP is allocated Rupees five Crores every year. So also each MLA is allocated Rupees five crores every year). But, lost is lost, and we still have resources nevertheless. In Kerala, for example, at least five Anglo-Indians have donated large parcels of land, and built churches. One Anglo-Indian, Mr. Harold Carver of Chandigarh built and donated (in 2023) a church worth about 55 crores! We still can survive with pride through our resources and talent, provided the so-called leaders, community members and organisations are prepared to unite to build our future.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Gidney's efforts to meet the leaders of Anglo-Indian organisations were something unparalleled in the history of Anglo-Indians, for Anglo-Indians have historically been hesitant to join forces across regions. In this context Gidney succeeded in bringing them together.

<sup>2</sup> The Government of India Act (British Act) is considered a landmark in the history of India as well as important for the Anglo-Indian community. It was in this Act the definition of Anglo-Indians, notifying '*Progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent*', was specified, which was later adopted in the Constitution of India in Article 366 (2).

<sup>3</sup> The formation of the All-India Anglo-Indian Association, after passing several phases of coming together and separation from the previous stages, happened in 1926. No doubt, it was Sir Henry Gidney's farsightedness and power to bring the others to his line of thought, that resulted the formation of the AIAIA.

<sup>4</sup> While the Government of India Act 1935 and Article 366 (2) of the Constitution of India clearly defined an Anglo-Indian as having '*Progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent*', Frank Anthony tried to keep away potential leaders from the South especially from Kerala. His infamous attitude that '*Feringhies*' of Kerala who are Portuguese descendants were not Anglo-Indians, was made unacceptable by the then Home Minister of India Pandit Govind Ballaba Pant during a debate in Lok Sabha. Also, Frank Anthony refused to accept the French descendants from Pondicherry as Anglo-Indians. Later, in both these cases the AIAIA had to accept the realities and law of the country.

<sup>5</sup> Kerala initiated the required steps to secure 'special reservations' for Anglo-Indians in professional institutions and earned seat reservations in Medicine, Engineering, Law, Computer courses, etc. in the 1950s. Karnataka followed further and in Andhra Pradesh, while Mrs. Christine Lazares was MLA she secured more than 150 seats in professional colleges for Anglo-Indians.

<sup>6</sup> CAISS runs a Night Shelter and home for the aged and a scheme to help the poor and provide medical assistance regularly.

<sup>7</sup> These leaders have earned a mark in the history of Anglo-Indians in India especially in the South. They secured several benefits for the community unlike the representatives in the North, who were under pressure from their so-called central leadership. The result was that little was accomplished in their period of office.

<sup>8</sup> *Jubileu de Ouro Golden Jubilee Souvenir, The Union of Anglo-Indian Associations, Kerala State*, pp. 142-144.

<sup>9</sup> From the MPLADS Fund of Dr. Beatrix D'Souza, five Anglo-Indian schools were allocated funds to construct new buildings. She was prepared to allocate funds for other States but as there was no land owned by Anglo-Indian Associations, she could not allocate funds in these centres.

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<sup>10</sup> Govt. of India MPLADS site; D'Rozario (2023, pp. 37, 38).

<sup>11</sup>D'Rozario (2014-15, pp.16,17); [G.O. No. 10/2014 dt 23.5.2014](#)

<sup>12</sup> G.O.Ms.16, Higher Education (EC2) 19<sup>th</sup> February 2009 and other consequent Orders allocating seats for Anglo-Indians in Professional Colleges; Dias (2019, p.247).

<sup>13</sup> Reg. No. DRO/SJN/SOR/133/12 Karnataka State.