Original Research Article

Impact of British Policy on the Social Mobility and Employment Opportunities of Eurasian Women in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century India

ABSTRACT

This discussion explored the multifaceted impact of British colonialism on Eurasian women's employment opportunities in 19th and early 20th-century India. We examined how societal expectations initially confined Eurasian women to marriage, particularly to European officers. However, colonial infrastructure development and changing social norms led to a diversification of employment options. The 1901 Madras census data revealed a significant number of Eurasian women working in various fields, including orphanages, education (teachers), healthcare (nurses, midwives), and skilled trades (seamstresses, milliners).Building on this foundation, the study aims to expand the understanding of working Eurasian women across all of India. Notably, even married women often continued working, contributing to household income. The discussion acknowledged the limitations of historical data, particularly the potential undercounting of Eurasian women in prostitution statistics. Overall, the analysis highlighted the complex interplay between colonialism, social hierarchies, and economic realities that shaped the evolving employment landscape for Eurasian women in British India.

KEYWORDS: Anglo-Indian women, Eurasian, Marriage, Employment, Prostitution,Nursing,Orphanage, Medicine, Nineteenth Century, British Colonialism etc.

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INTRODUCTION

The colonial encounter in 19th-century India presents a fascinating case study in the intersection of race, gender, and economic realities. Eurasian women, born from unions between European men and Indian women, occupied a precarious position within the colonial social hierarchy. This essay delves into the evolving experiences of Eurasian women in British India, particularly focusing on the interplay between societal expectations around marriage, the emergence of employment opportunities, and the broader impact of colonial policies.Initially, social norms heavily influenced the trajectory of Eurasian women's lives. Marriage, particularly to European officers associated with the East India Company, was often seen as the ideal path. However, this ideal was contingent upon prevailing social attitudes and the regulations implemented by the Company itself. We will explore how these regulations, designed to control the demographics of British India, impacted the possibilities for marriage and family life for Eurasian women.

Beyond the realm of marriage, the 19th century witnessed a gradual expansion of employment opportunities for Eurasian women. This transformation can be attributed to several factors, including infrastructure development within the colony and a shift in societal norms. Orphanages, initially reluctant to admit Eurasian girls, began offering vocational

training, equipping them with skills for self-sufficiency. Educational advancements also opened doors to professions like teaching, nursing, and midwifery. This discussion acknowledges the limitations of historical data, particularly the potential undercounting of Eurasian women in prostitution statistics.

Within the context of colonial India, a discernible disparity in remuneration existed between Eurasian males and their European counterparts, with the latter group demonstrably commanding a higher wage.However, following the reforms of 1833, nominally higher-salaried covenanted positions became accessible to Eurasian males. Despite this advancement, a significant obstacle remained. The competitive examinations and requisite European education, often obtained in England, proved largely unattainable for most Eurasians due to financial constraints and logistical hurdles.remained largely unattainable for most Eurasians due to financial constraints and logistical hurdles. This disadvantage persisted even in examinations for provincial services within India. Here, Eurasian males faced stiff competition from both a better-educated Indian populace and a continual influx of European candidates seeking similar positions.Their ambiguous social position further compounded these challenges. Eurasians found themselves excluded from opportunities designated for both Hindu and Muslim communities.Exacerbating these difficulties was the high cost associated with a European lifestyle, central to Eurasian identity. Decent housing, domestic staff, Western attire, furnishings, carriages, and Christian/European education for children all demanded significant financial resources. Consequently, female employment became crucial for many Eurasian families.

Further complicating their situation, Eurasian women encountered escalating social exclusion and prejudice, particularly for those who previously aspired to European society. Lower-class women even faced desertion. These hardships, coupled with the exclusion of Eurasians from pension funds in the early 19th century, created a powerful disincentive for intermarriage. Short-term military enlistments and technical contracts offered limited financial security, perpetuating the cycle of economic hardship for Eurasian families.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This article is crucial to read as it sheds light on the often-overlooked experiences of Eurasianwomen in colonial India, revealing their resilience, agency, and significant contributions tosociety despite facing discrimination and limited opportunities. By understanding their historicalstruggles and triumphs, we can gain valuable insights into the complexities of identity, gender,and social mobility in a colonial context. This knowledge is essential for fostering a moreinclusive and equitable society, where the contributions of all individuals are recognized andvalued, regardless of their background or heritage.

This study makes a significant contribution to the field of history by focusing on the workinglives of Eurasian women in India, a topic previously neglected in historiography. By analysing the 1901 Madras Presidency census data, this research provides concrete evidence of the diverseoccupations pursued by Eurasian women, including seamstresses, milliners, school teachers,midwives, nurses, domestic servants, shop assistants, and clerks. This

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challenges the prevailingnotion that Eurasian women were primarily confined to domestic roles or dependent on marriagefor economic security. By shedding light on this previously unexplored aspect of Eurasianwomenlives, this study fills a significant gap in historical knowledge and contributes to a morenuanced understanding of the social and economic dynamics of colonial India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are some objectives of the study on "Impact of British Policy on the Social Mobility and Employment Opportunities of Eurasian Women in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century India". These are-

1. To examine the impact of British colonial policies and societal expectations on Eurasian
   women'slives in 19th and early 20th century India.
2. To analyze the diversification of employment roles for Eurasian women in various sectors during the colonial period.
3. To determine the approximate number of working Eurasian women across India from existing census data.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This historical analysis examines the social mobility and employment opportunities of Eurasian women in 19th and 20th century India using a mixed-methods approach. The study utilizes quantitative data from the 1901 Madras Presidency census to analyze employment trends and qualitative data from historical documents, letters, newspapers, travelogues, poems, and fiction to understand the social context and cultural representations of Eurasian women. The sample size for the quantitative analysis is 1,680 employed Eurasian women. The study design is a historical analysis that combines descriptive statistics and content analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influenced the employment opportunities and social mobility of Eurasian women in colonial India. Data has been collected from various primary and secondary sources of information. The primary sources data collected from reports and government census. The secondary sources data collated from books, articles, research papers monographs, thesis and other literary sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prejudices

Exemplifying the prevailing British attitudes of the 1830s, Julia Maitland, a visiting "Lady" at the Madras military orphanage, documented her views on Eurasian girls. However, Maitland offered a surprising counterpoint, suggesting that these prejudices were not one-sided:'Those half- caste girls are in the depths of ignorance,indolence, and worthlessness, and utterly neglected; they have no ideas but of dress and making love....scarcely any of them really are orphans; and the half- caste young left handed ladies look down upon the poor little honestly-born Europeans, and boast of being gentleman's children;and they go out visiting their relatives without shame or ceremony' (Maitland, 1846, pp. 131-2).

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While the arrival of more European women in India after 1833 coincided with an upswing in prejudice against Eurasian women, it's unlikely to be the sole cause. This phenomenon seems to be rooted in a more insidious shift within British society, reflecting broader societal biases that had been solidifying for some time.Julia Maitland's commentary exposes a multifaceted web of prejudices. Her observations reveal class distinctions among Eurasian girls, with some looking down on the daughters of soldiers. This highlights a deflection of societal disapproval, where fathers of illegitimate Eurasian children attempted to deflect shame by associating all Eurasians with illegitimacy. Maitland further exposes the pervasive racial prejudice directed at Eurasian women in general. However, it's important to note that conflating Eurasian with illegitimate is a misconception, as orphanage records demonstrate a significant number of legitimate births.The very notion of shame associated with intermarriage underscores the deeply entrenched racial prejudice of the Victorians. Their worldview deemed it inconceivable for a respectable white woman to even contemplate a non-European husband. This double standard stands in stark contrast to the behavior of European men who continued to marry Eurasian women or father illegitimate children with them. Despite the theoretical color-blindness of the 1833 Charter Act, societal norms remained firmly rooted in racial hierarchies. This policing of racial boundaries continued through less formal means, with social ostracization and the power of the press reinforcing these prejudices.

Official pronouncements aside, prejudice against Eurasians permeated popular culture. Travelogues by seasoned British officials, like those of Gilchrist (Gilchrist, 1825), often offered disparaging portrayals. Similarly, the burgeoning genre of Anglo-Indian fiction (Valenti, 1811), while not yet fully exploring the theme, implicitly reinforced acceptable societal views towards intermarriage, often couching it as the perilous act of ‘miscegenation.’

Early Anglo-Indian fiction served as a cautionary tale for intermarriage.Works like the 1833 short story by Ephraim Middle race exemplified the perceived pitfalls. The titular character, a mixed-race man, experiences rejection and ridicule in England despite marrying an "honorable" lady. Only upon returning to Calcutta and marrying a Eurasian woman does he find acceptance and happiness. This narrative reinforces the notion that Eurasians were destined for marginalization within British society, and intermarriage offered no escape. (Journal, 1845)Mid-century works like Stoqueler’s‘A Tale of East India Life’ further emphasized the ostracisation faced by Eurasians. The protagonist, Edmund Merton, embodies the tragedy. Despite his education and comfort in England, he is plunged into despair when his marriage proposal to an English woman in India is rejected. The narrative cites ‘English girls... obligations to society’ as the reason, highlighting the rigid social codes that policed racial boundaries. This reinforces the message that Eurasians, regardless of their merits, were deemed perpetually outsiders within British society, both in England and India (Stocqueler, 1845).Early Anglo-Indian fiction perpetuated a series of harmful stereotypes about Eurasian women. These narratives often depicted them as either predatory seductresses or tragic figures, preying upon or ensnaring naive European men. This reinforced prevailing racial prejudices and served as a constant literary reminder of the supposed dangers of ‘miscegenation.’[1]

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Marriages

By 1820, the upper orphanage in Calcutta witnessed a shift. European girls, and possibly some Eurasians deemed "acceptable," were repatriated to Britain. This coincided with the discontinuation of the twice-monthly concerts in the 1830s, events that likely fostered social interactions between European men and Eurasian women. Furthermore, gentlemen were actively discouraged from forming such relationships, reflecting a hardening of societal attitudes.Emma Roberts writes that:'The progress of refinement has materially altered the condition of these young ladies, but has acted in a manner the very reverse of improvement, as far as their individual interests are concerned...."

The prejudices against 'dark beauties' (the phrase usually employed to designate those who are the inheritors of the native complexion) are daily gaining ground (Roberts, 1837). Deprived of their former marriageable prospects, orphaned or abandoned Eurasian daughters from higher-ranking European families faced a bleak outlook. Without private means or supportive relatives, they found themselves ostracized from their own social class and seemingly destined to a life within the orphanage walls. This vulnerability of Eurasian women and children, particularly those lacking family support, had been a persistent concern since the early decades of the century.As Henry Derozio poignantly captured in his poem, these women faced an existence of isolation and despair:

There was a youth of expectations high,
Heir to a mighty line, with wealth so vast,
You might have deemed some favouring genius laid
Earth's treasures at his feet.Her only dower
Was that which nature gave her on her face
Abandoned and caught in a storm with her dead child, she laments as:
Where is the home that should have sheltered us,
The arm that should have pillowed me and thee,
The Breast that should have hid us in its folds,
The voice that should have bid the winds be still,
And soothed us in calamity?
.. . Thy father - but I will not dream of him -
And I for thee have nothing,my poor boy!
But a disastrous world of woe before me.
Ah! Now thou'rt cold, cold as thy father's heart;
…. There is more mercy in th'ungentle wind
Than constancy in man!(Derozio, 1828).

Derozio's depiction might resonate particularly with the experiences of Eurasian girls who married East India Company men. These 'three hundred a year men,' as they were termed based on their salary, often harbored inflated expectations regarding their wives' financial standing. Many Eurasian women, lacking independent wealth, found themselves particularly vulnerable. Frequent reassignments, retirements back to England, and societal pressures often enabled unscrupulous men to abandon their families with relative ease. The situation was further exacerbated by the refusal of pension funds to pay legally married Eurasian wives in

the early 19th century. This economic disenfranchisement left these women with even fewer options, mirroring the despairing figure in Derozio's poem.

ALTERNATIVES

Despite the bleak outlook for many, alternatives to marriage did emerge as a means of support for Eurasian women, particularly as the 19th century progressed. The 1901 census for the Madras Presidency documented 1,680 Eurasian women employed in various sectors.[2] While 537 resided in orphanages or similar institutions, a significant number actively participated in the workforce. These included 262 seamstresses and milliners, 201 school teachers, 107 midwives and nurses, 81 domestic servants, and 38 shop assistants and clerks.[3] This data indicates a growing economic agency among Eurasian women, even if societal acceptance remained limited.Extrapolating from the Madras data, the female Eurasian workforce across Bengal, Madras, and Bombay presidencies likely exceeded 5,000 in 1901 (Walker, 1863).

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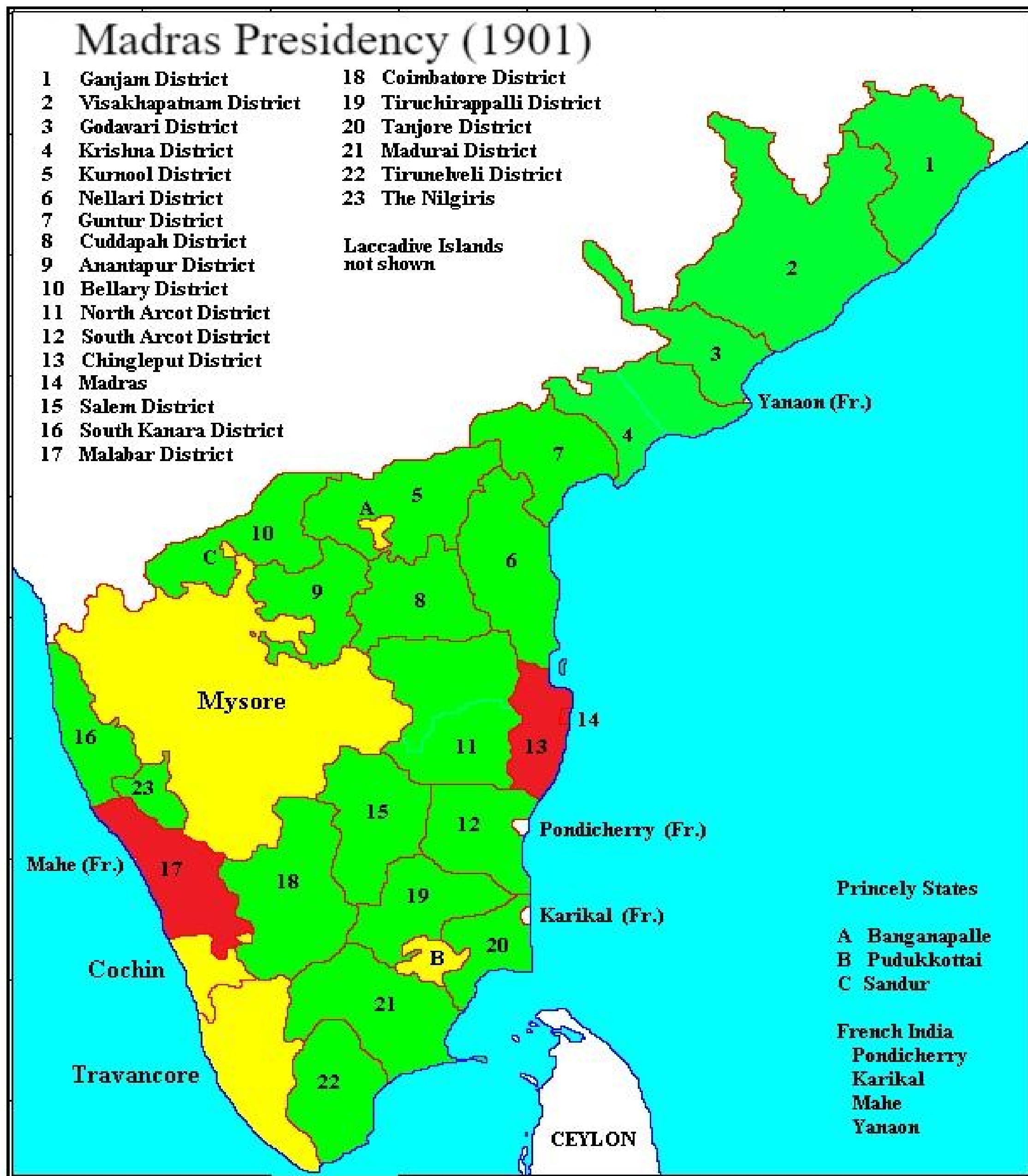

Map 1 :Data Sources: *British India Govt. Census 1901, www.alchetron.com*

This Study is based on the largest Eurasian population in red indicated three districts of Madras presidency during British India. However, it's important to note that the specific occupations varied by region. This suggests a degree of regional economic specialization within the Eurasian community, with women adapting their skillsets to local opportunities.The 1901 Madras Presidency census data is a key source for understanding the working lives of Eurasian women in India. Given the lack of comparable data from other regions, the 1901 Madras Presidency census data serves as a valuable proxy for understanding the working lives of Eurasian women across India, especially considering the relatively even distribution of the Eurasian population in major presidencies like Bengal and

Madras during that time. To understand Eurasians' work in different sectors across India, it is crucial to review their population statistics.

Table-1 Census of India: Estimated Eurasian Population by Provinces and Agency

S. No.	British Provinces in India	1891	1901
1.	Madras	26671	26209
2.	Bengal	15162	20893
3.	Bombay	8809	6889
4.	United Provinces	7044	5230
5.	Ajmer	636	341
6.	Andaman's	111	71
7.	Baluchistan	147	124
8.	Punjab and North West Frontier	3155	2498
	All Provinces total Population in India	71877	73879

* Sources- Baines, *Census of India, 1891*, 1893, pp. 177-82; H.H. Risley & E.A. Gait, *Report On the Census of India, 1901*,Government Printing Press, Calcutta, 1903, p. 219; Goodrich, *Making,* 1952.

The data indicates a stark contrast in the Eurasian population trends between Madras and Bengal province from 1891 to 1901. While the Eurasian population in Madras remained relatively stable[4], Bengal experienced a substantial increase of 37% over the ten-year period. But The official count of mixed-race individuals in British India dropped significantly from 1891 to 1901in many provinces. However, this decline was misleading due to misclassification in the 1881 census. Many mixed-race individuals, particularly in Bombay, were incorrectly categorized as 'European' or 'British Subject.' This confusion stemmed from the census wording and likely resulted in an undercounting of the mixed-race population across British India.

Seamstresses

Orphanages played a crucial role in equipping Eurasian girls with marketable skills. Sewing was a mainstay of their education, serving a threefold purpose. Firstly, it provided clothing for the orphanage residents. Secondly, the sale of their garments generated additional income for the institutions. Most importantly, these skills offered young women a path towards self-sufficiency in adulthood.Projecting from the Madras census data, approximately 800 Eurasian women across India likely supported themselves as independent seamstresses and milliners in 1901. This figure is likely dwarfed by the number actively practicing within orphanages, potentially reaching upwards of 1,600. Beyond these formally employed women, countless wives and mothers undoubtedly utilized their sewing skills to create household linens and clothing for their families. This practical skill served as a crucial safety net, particularly for widows who could rely on their expertise to generate income later in life.

This reliance on sewing transcended institutional settings. British newspapers in India routinely carried advertisements by Eurasian seamstresses seeking positions in private

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households. Conversely, families seeking skilled dressmakers for their domestic needs would also utilize these classified sections (Allen, 1805). These advertisements illuminate a vital aspect of the Eurasian experience in colonial India, showcasing their practical skills and entrepreneurial spirit within a system that often marginalized them.The demand for skilled needle workers extended beyond Eurasian communities.Female domestic servants, workhouse staff, and even hospital employees found their value enhanced by proficiency in sewing and garment maintenance. In India, as we've seen, orphanages and missionary institutions similarly recognized the practical and economic benefits of these skills, incorporating them into the educational curriculum for young women.

Domestic Service

Domestic service, though seemingly a natural fit for Eurasian women, was hampered by societal biases within the European community. One significant barrier was the perception of their English speaking abilities. As Emma Roberts disparagingly remarks:'their pronunciation was deemed "short and disagreeable," lacking the proper cadence expected of nannies or governesses. This prejudice, however well-founded or not, restricted opportunities for Eurasian women within a traditional domestic service role'.Compounding the issue of language, even greater prejudice existed regarding Eurasian women as housekeepers. Native *ayahs* were often preferred, as their limited English supposedly shielded children from 'degenerated' speech. Furthermore, a disturbing stereotype portrayed Eurasian women as inherently flirtatious and lacking the domestic focus that, ironically, was seen as mitigating the sexual threat posed by native women (Sen, 2001).[4]This racist and sexist trope further restricted Eurasian women's access to domestic roles, pushing them towards less desirable or lower-paying alternatives.Furthermore, Eurasian women were perceived as unwelcome competition by European women in India. Their exclusion from social circles and opportunities to meet eligible bachelors fostered resentment. Beyond perceived competition, European women also perpetuated the idea that Eurasian women posed a threat to European men, particularly those lacking access to suitable European partners. The prevailing sentiment, as expressed in some quarters, was that marriage to a Eurasian woman would inevitably lead to the degradation of the husband, who would ultimately be ashamed of his wife's social standing (Anonymous, 1835). This fear-mongering served to further isolate Eurasian women and limit their marriage prospects.

The combined effect of these prejudices was evident in the 1901 census data, which documented a mere 300 Eurasian women employed as domestic servants across India. This figure stands in stark contrast to the significant number engaged in sewing and other professions. However, a glimmer of hope emerges from two advertisements placed in The Times (UK) by Eurasian nurses seeking positions with families traveling to India, While the success of these advertisements remains unknown.[5]Faced with such restrictions, some Eurasian women might have resorted to unconventional strategies. Disguising their English fluency, adopting Indian attire, and seeking employment as native *ayahs* could have been a desperate attempt to navigate the web of prejudice. This act of assumed identity, however, carried its own risks of exposure and potential exploitation.

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Teacher

In contrast to the extensive debates surrounding boys' education, the discourse on girls' schooling, particularly for Eurasians, remained relatively muted throughout the 19th century. Many small, private schools, like the one run by Henry Derozio's mother (Thomas Edward, 1884), catered to this population. The success of these institutions often hinged on the reputation and skills of the individual running them, with the curriculum reflecting their personal strengths. Formal qualifications were often less emphasized compared to boys' education, highlighting the prevailing societal attitudes that placed less value on formal learning for Eurasian girls.The curriculum in these private schools often diverged from the standard "three R's" (reading, writing, and arithmetic) typically associated with boys' education. Teachers prioritized a set of "five R's," incorporating religious instruction based on the school's denomination alongside traditionally feminine refinements like French, music, dance, and, of course, needlework. Even in larger, non-government-funded schools catering to Eurasians, the emphasis remained on these accomplishments. This focus, coupled with the fact that many Eurasian teachers themselves lacked formal training, suggests a societal expectation that prioritized social graces over a rigorous academic education for Eurasian girls (D'Souza, 1976).The 'on-the-job' training approach was often employed in these schools. Following a method championed by educational reformer Andrew Bell, senior students would take on the role of instructors for younger pupils[6]. While this peer-to-peer approach fostered leadership skills in some, it also highlighted the resource constraints faced by these institutions.

The lack of qualified teachers further limited the educational opportunities available to Eurasian girls, perpetuating a cycle of limited qualifications and circumscribed career prospects.A glimmer of hope emerged in the form of expanding job opportunities for Eurasian women as teachers. Government and missionary efforts to broaden access to education for native girls created a demand for female instructors. Social mores also played a role: many native men preferred female teachers for their daughters, and European women teachers remained a limited pool. Furthermore, government initiatives to recruit Muslim and Hindu women into teaching were slow to yield results (IOR/V/24/842, 1889). This confluence of factors presented a unique opportunity for Eurasian women, who, despite lacking formal qualifications in many cases, were seen as a suitable alternative due to their familiarity with both European and Indian cultures, and their ability to speak the local languages.Despite the growing opportunities for Eurasian women as teachers, societal expectations for European women in India remained largely confined to the domestic sphere. The ideal of the married *memsahib* revolved around managing a household and engaging in charitable activities[7]. European society, particularly, harbored anxieties about the dangers India posed to single white women, both physical and moral. Similarly, there's evidence suggesting that some segments of native society viewed their influence with suspicion (IOR/V/24/839, 1882). These combined factors limited the professional aspirations of European women in India, creating a clear demarcation between their expected roles and those increasingly embraced by Eurasian women.

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Despite the growing demand, Eurasian women teachers also encountered prejudices. Their Christian faith posed a challenge for conservative Hindus, who harbored anxieties about potential proselytesation (IOR/V/24/840, 1884). Even within missionary circles, some, like Jane Johnson, expressed reservations. Her complaints about Eurasian teachers' table manners and attire at the Delhi mission in the 1870s, while reflecting class biases, pointed to a perception that Eurasians didn't readily conform to the idealized image of a 'lady' (Alice Thorner, 2000). This further complicated their professional acceptance, despite their cultural and linguistic advantages.The final decades of the 19th century witnessed a gradual shift towards formal teacher training for Eurasian women. Government schools and missionary colleges began offering such programs, albeit with limitations (D'Souza, 1976, p. 128). The Madras government's teacher training college in the 1870s, for instance, included Eurasians alongside Sudras and Christians, acknowledging their potential while reflecting the prevailing social hierarchy (Weaver, 1997). Similarly, Bengal saw nine Eurasian women enrolled in the first teacher training batch at Kurseong in 1901. The initial one-year program was later extended to two years' post-matriculation, reflecting a growing emphasis on qualifications. However, it's important to note that teacher training in the 1880s remained largely unregulated, suggesting a nascent stage in professionalizing the field for women, including Eurasians(D'Souza, 1976, p. 128).Due to limited government inspections of schools for Eurasians and the late introduction of formal teacher training, obtaining an accurate count of unqualified Eurasian women teachers in the 19th century is impossible. Furthermore, the decentralized nature of Eurasian education, with nearly half the schools run by Catholic orders and most being denominational, adds to the difficulty. A national policy on Eurasian and European education wasn't even established until 1905.

Despite these limitations, the information gleaned from the Madras census and other sources paints a vivid picture of the challenges and opportunities faced by Eurasian women as they sought employment and educational opportunities. While societal prejudices and a lack of formal qualifications undoubtedly restricted their options, their resourcefulness, cultural fluency, and growing access to teacher training programs all point to a gradual improvement in their professional prospects within the educational sector.Anthony's estimation of 15,000 Eurasian and European children attending Indian schools in 1871, along with the growing involvement of Eurasian women teachers, underscores the potential scale of their contribution (Anthony, 1962). This figure likely encompasses not just government schools but also those run by missions and private individuals. Furthermore, Eurasian women educators extended their reach beyond European and Eurasian students. Their presence in girls' schools, *zenana* projects focused on educating women in seclusion, and native education initiatives highlights their versatility and commitment to spreading knowledge across social boundaries. The 1901 Madras census data, documenting over 200 Eurasian women teachers in the presidency alone, offers a glimpse into the scale of their involvement, particularly in southern India[8].The lack of standardized regulations extended to teacher salaries as well. Eurasian women likely received varying compensation depending on factors like experience, location, and the type of school – private, railway-run, government-funded, or missionary. This disparity would have further disadvantaged some women, particularly those confined to teaching in their homes or smaller private schools. However, the expansion of the railway network and the

growth of government and mission schools also presented opportunities for potentially higher and more stable incomes for qualified Eurasian women educators.

Nursingand Midwifery

Formal training and employment in nursing and midwifery offered a longer-established path for Eurasian women compared to teaching. In contrast to Britain, where nursing initially relied on domestic servants, nuns, and well-meaning ladies, India had a tradition of male sick attendants. However, the 18th century already witnessed a change in Bombay, with a small number of nuns and even English nurses catering to the healthcare needs of European residents (Jaggi, 1979). This suggests a gradual shift towards a more professionalized approach to nursing care, paving the way for the eventual inclusion of Eurasian women in the field. His establishment of the Madras Midwifery School in 1843 marked a significant step towards formalizing midwifery training in India. However, the government's initial attitude towards these programs was often dismissive. This created an opening for Eurasian women, who could leverage their cultural background and language skills to bridge the gap between European medical practices and the existing birthing traditions. They could potentially compete with, or collaborate with, the established dais, the experienced but untrained birth attendants serving communities across India.

While the government might have viewed these traditional dais with suspicion, dismissing them as 'sunk in ignorance and superstition' Eurasian women, if equipped with proper training, could have offered a more credible and culturally sensitive alternative (Jaggi, 1979, p. 93).The year 1871 witnessed a crucial turning point with discussions leading to improved training for both nurses and midwives. The arrival of Nightingale nurses from England equipped them to train female pupils, extending the duration of instruction to a more substantial 18-24 months. This curriculum, overseen by the medical warrant officer and the matron, differed from the Nightingale system in a key aspect. While the Nightingale model primarily focused on producing hospital nurses, the Indian adaptation aimed to create a cadre of not only hospital staff but also independent practitioners. This distinction catered to the specific needs of the vast and diverse Indian population, where access to formal medical facilities might have been limited in many regions. Eurasian women, with their fluency in local languages and cultural understanding, were ideally placed to benefit from this revised training program and serve as independent midwives in communities beyond the reach of larger hospitals.

The scarcity of European women nurses in India created a significant opportunity for Eurasian women in the nursing profession. Estimates suggest that by independence, Eurasians comprised a substantial portion, perhaps around 80 per cent according to Anthony, of all nurses, encompassing both military and civilian sectors (Anthony, 1962, pp. x-xi). This dominance is further supported by data from Madras, where an 1865 list documented that 60 out of 80 qualified midwives were Eurasian[9]. These figures underscore the crucial role Eurasian women played in providing healthcare across India, particularly considering the vast geographical distances and limited medical facilities in many regions.

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An interesting distinction emerged between Eurasian nurses in India and those in Britain. Unlike their British counterparts, who were expected to be single and often left the profession upon marriage until the mid-20th century, Eurasian nurses in India were predominantly married women. This is evident from the available data, such as the 1879 list from Madras, where nearly 75 per cent (133 out of 192) were classified as 'East-Indians',a term often used for Eurasians. Only seven Europeans and East Indians on this list remained unmarried. This trend likely reflected the prevailing social norms in India, where women exiting the workforce after marriage was less common.Furthermore, the geographical reach of these Eurasian nurses is noteworthy. The data shows they weren't confined to Madras, but dispersed across British India, including Burma, and even ventured beyond, working in princely states, Singapore, and even Europe. This mobility and dedication to their profession further underscore their vital contribution to healthcare throughout the region.

Extrapolating from the 192 qualified nurses and midwives in Madras by 1879, a conservative estimate suggests there could have been at least 600 such women across India, with Eurasians likely comprising around 450 of that total. This figure paints a vivid picture of the significant role Eurasian women played in healthcare provision throughout the subcontinent.To gain a deeper understanding of the unique position of Eurasian nurses in India compared to their British counterparts, it would be interesting to compare census data from India with the calculations by Colley for England and Wales in 1881. This comparison could reveal not only the numerical differences but also potential variations in demographics, training, and employment structures for nurses in these two colonial contexts.The data on nurse demographics strengthens the case for the unique role of Eurasian women in Indian healthcare. Colley's findings for England and Wales in 1881 reveal a mere 0.4 per cent of adult women employed in nursing or related medical services (Collet, 1898). This contrasts sharply with the situation in India, where calculations based on the 1881 census suggest a rate exceeding 2 per cent of adult Eurasian women working as nurses and midwives. To be more precise, if we consider that a third of the 62,000 Eurasians identified in the census were adult women, then we're looking at a potential of around 225 nurses and midwives per 10,000 Eurasian women (Plowden, 1883). This over five-fold difference underscores the critical role Eurasian women played in filling the gap in healthcare provision across British India.

Despite the lack of standardized salaries for nurses in 19th-century India, the available data offers some insights. During training, nurses and midwives at institutions like the Madras Lying-in Hospital and the Lady Curzon Hospital in Bangalore received basic necessities like food and accommodation, along with a monthly stipend of Rs. 15. This figure likely reflected the trainee status and the fact that their work potentially contributed to the hospital's functioning.However, upon qualification, salaries could vary considerably. While qualified nurses in Madras government service typically received Rs. 50 per month, some Eurasian nurses, like Mrs. Talbot, a midwifery instructor in Rewah state, could command significantly higher salaries – in her case, Rs. 130 per month between 1886 and 1889 (NAI, 1889). This disparity suggests that factors like experience, specialization, location, and employer (government vs. private) all played a role in determining a nurse's income.Corroborating the existence of a higher salary range for qualified Eurasian nurses, an

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1897 report in The Times of India documented nurses trained at the prestigious Sir J.J. Hospital in Bombay receiving a monthly salary of Rs. 150 along with free accommodations. This data point aligns with the earlier example of Mrs. Talbot, suggesting that certain hospitals, particularly esteemed institutions like Sir J.J., might have offered more competitive compensation packages to attract and retain skilled Eurasian nurses. This reinforces the argument that factors like location, training, and employer all played a significant role in shaping the remuneration of Eurasian women within the healthcare system of colonial India.

The late 19th century witnessed a curious tension within the healthcare apparatus of British India. On one hand, there was a perceived need for familiarity and control, often leading to the deployment of British nurses. On the other hand, a readily available, culturally competent domestic nursing workforce existed, raising questions about the efficacy and rationale behind importing European personnel.

An illuminating primary source emerges from a late 1897 publication in the journal of the Bombay Anglo-Indian Association. This article vehemently contested the decision to import British nurses specifically for plague duty, unveiling a multifaceted critique. Firstly, it cast doubt on the effectiveness of European nurses in the Indian context. Their lack of acclimatization, the article argued, could render them less effective in combating local diseases and navigating the specificities of the Indian environment. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the article viewed the deployment of British nurses as a slur on the capabilities of the existing healthcare personnel. Here, the focus shifted to the substantial pool of Anglo-Indian and native nurses, all demonstrably qualified through British training programs conducted within India. These locally trained nurses possessed a crucial advantage – their cultural fluency and linguistic competence. This deep understanding of the habits and languages of their countrymen, the article emphasized, positioned them for superior patient interaction and overall effectiveness.

This episode compels us to interrogate the underlying assumptions that shaped colonial healthcare policies. The privileging of European nurses, despite potential drawbacks in terms of acclimatization and cultural understanding, suggests a lingering emphasis on a Euro-centric approach.Madras Presidency stands out as a crucial region in the story of women's healthcare advancements in colonial India. Here, medical and nursing education, along with employment practices, often served as a model for later, nationwide initiatives undertaken by the government. This pioneering spirit extended beyond the borders of Madras itself, attracting female medical students and aspiring nurses from across the vast Indian subcontinent.

One such trailblazer was Mary Scharlieb, a name etched in the annals of Indian medical history. As one of the first female medical students in India, and having received her training in Madras, Scharlieb played a pivotal role in paving the way not only for her own future success but also for the broader societal acceptance of women doctors. Her journey and achievements undoubtedly inspired and emboldened other women to pursue careers in medicine. The willingness of students like Scharlieb to travel to Madras underscores the

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institution's reputation and the opportunities it offered for aspiring female medical professionals. This influx of talent from across India further enriched the Madras healthcare ecosystem, fostering a spirit of innovation and progress. In essence, Madras emerged as a vital center, not just for medical education and practice but also for the transformation of societal attitudes towards women in the medical field.

The Madras Lying-in Hospital emerges as a crucial site for understanding the multifaceted nature of nursing training for Eurasian women in colonial India. While basic training programs existed, the hospital offered a more advanced level of instruction, catering specifically to experienced Eurasian and European nurses. This 15-month program aimed to equip them with expertise in both sick nursing and midwifery, a valuable skillset that would have significantly enhanced their professional capabilities.

The structure of the program itself is noteworthy. Following an initial six months of sick nursing training, students transitioned to midwifery instruction, which lasted for an additional six to nine months. This sequential approach ensured a strong foundation in general nursing principles before delving into the specialized field of midwifery. Furthermore, the financial support provided to students in the form of travel allowances, accommodation, food, and a monthly stipend of Rs. 15 highlights the hospital's commitment to attracting and retaining qualified nurses.

However, the data also reveals a stratified training system. The presence of a separate 'native class' suggests a potential difference in curriculum or qualification levels for Indian nurses compared to their Eurasian and European counterparts. Additionally, the 1879 list documenting 192 qualified nurses and midwives from Madras reveals a more nuanced picture of the workforce's composition. While a significant portion (around 75 per cent) were classified as 'East-Indians' (a term often used for Eurasians), 30 individuals were identified as Indian. This presence of Indian nurses, albeit a minority, underscores the evolving landscape of the healthcare profession and the potential for women from diverse backgrounds to participate in formal training programs.

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Medicine

The landscape of medical care in 1870s India presented a stark reality – a vast majority of women, estimated at around 70 million, lacked access to qualified medical professionals. This was further compounded by the fact that the predominantly male medical profession remained largely inaccessible, except perhaps for close relatives of a doctor. However, amidst this restrictive environment, a spark of change ignited in the form of missionary initiatives.

The year 1870 witnessed a ground-breaking development when an American mission at Bareilly embarked on a revolutionary path – training 'native Christian women' as healthcare workers. This singular act marked a turning point, challenging the established norms and paving the way for greater female participation in the medical field. The ripple effect of this initiative was significant, with several other missionary doctors across India

following suit. From Allahabad (Prayagraj) and Jabalpur in Central India to Lucknow, Sialkot, and Ambala, missionary hospitals became hubs for training Indian women, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to provide much-needed healthcare services (Jaggi, 1979, pp. 93-6,101-2). The motivations behind these missionary endeavors were likely multifaceted. Certainly, a desire to spread Christianity played a role. But equally important may have been a genuine concern for the well-being of women, who were often hesitant to seek medical attention from male doctors due to cultural norms. By training women as healthcare workers, missionaries provided a more culturally sensitive and accessible option for female patients.

These early initiatives, though limited in scope, laid the groundwork for a broader movement towards women's medical education in India. Their significance lies not just in the practical skills imparted to the women trainees but also in the ideological shift they represented. The notion that women could be trained medical professionals and contribute meaningfully to healthcare delivery began to take root.The late 1870s witnessed a hesitant step towards progress in India – government-sponsored training programs for European and Eurasian women doctors began at Madras. However, this nascent movement faced significant social resistance. Deep-seated prejudices regarding female capabilities were readily expressed, with some questioning whether females of any kind are fit to be doctors. This skepticism highlights the prevailing societal norms of the time, where women were largely confined to the domestic sphere and their intellectual pursuits were often discouraged.

The expansion of such programs into the 1880s brought yet another layer of complexity. While Bengal began admitting Eurasian women to Calcutta Medical School in 1885, concerns arose about the physical and moral stamina of native women trainees. This underlying racial bias and the assumption that Indian women, particularly those from non-European backgrounds, lacked the necessary resilience for medical studies further complicated the path towards inclusivity. However, Bombay's Grant Medical College in 1887 offered a glimmer of hope. Here, a more diverse cohort emerged, with 17 women from several communities training together. This suggests a tentative move towards recognizing the potential of women from various ethnicities within the medical profession.Despite the pioneering efforts of these institutions, the pursuit of medical training remained uncommon for women across India, regardless of community. Even as late as 1913, the subcontinent had a mere 81 females medical students[10]. This paucity reflects the significant social and cultural hurdles that women seeking a medical career had to overcome.

The Lady Curzon Hospital, Bangalore

The lady Curzon hospital in Bangalore unveils a microcosm of the power dynamics embedded within colonial healthcare in India. Table1 below provides a breakdown of staff grades along with their corresponding salaries during the 1902-1903 institutional reforms. A tiered structure based on race, qualifications, and gender is evident. Nuns, occupying the lowest rung, received marginally more than trainees. This exposes the limitations of religious vocation in translating to financial reward. Furthermore, Eurasian nurses, despite their qualifications, were significantly underpaid compared to European counterparts. This

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disparity underscores the racial prejudice that valued European qualifications above all else, even when skillsets were likely comparable. The document's justification for renaming Assistant Surgeon to Lady Doctor reinforces this concept. European medical qualifications were deemed essential, implying an Indian woman, regardless of her expertise, might not be a true Doctor without them. The renaming of Eurasian nurse to charge nurse reflects a more practical approach, addressing potential conflict arising from Eurasian nurses' claims to European status. This highlights the complexities of racial identity within the colonial context. While the Eurasian nurse's salary of Rs. 50 per month may seem low today, it's crucial to consider the prevailing economic realities. Compared to other available professions, this income could have represented significant financial independence for a qualified Eurasian woman. The Lady Curzon Hospital exemplifies the intricate interplay of race, gender, qualifications, and power within colonial healthcare.

Captain Standage, the incumbent Residency Surgeon of Bangalore, occupied a position of dual authority within the colonial healthcare apparatus. While his primary responsibility lay with the Bowring Civil Station Hospital, catering to male patients, he also exercised some influence over the Lady Curzon Hospital, which served women and children. The nursing staff at the Lady Curzon displayed a distinct composition – a blend of nuns and Eurasian nurses – noticeably absent were pupil nurses, and more strikingly, any Indian nurses. Captain Standage's remuneration package reflected his elevated position. Beyond his base salary, likely commensurate with his rank as a Captain in the Indian Medical Service, he received a handsome monthly allowance of Rs. 200 for his hospital management duties, supplemented by a further Rs. 50 living allowance and Rs. 30 for housing costs. This data illuminates a hierarchical system, with European (or Eurasian) medical personnel at the helm.

Prostitution and Destitution

Derozio's 1827 poem,*The Orphan Girl*, employs a potent vocabulary to depict the plight of a young woman left destitute by the deaths of both parents. The language constructs a stark binary – virtue requires a male protector (presumably a husband or guardian), while its absence leads the orphan down a path of societal scorn and moral transgression (Anonymous, 1871).While the exact number of Eurasian women who turned to prostitution in Derozio's era remains obscure, Calcutta's statistics from 1880 offer a glimpse into the social anxieties of the time. Amongst 2458 brothel keepers and 7001 prostitutes, only 46 were identified as Eurasian, and 65 as European (Ballhatchet, 1980). This relatively low number, however, needs to be viewed within the context of the prevailing social discourse. Derozio's 1827 poem, *The Orphan Girl,* exemplifies the societal fear that orphaned European or Eurasian women, lacking male protectors, would inevitably be forced into a life of vice.

In their response to the company's prohibition on returning orphans to Britain, the Bengal Orphan Fund managers strategically appealed to the sensibilities of their audience. They argued that the case of the female orphans merited more than ordinary attention due to their inherent vulnerability. The mere designation of their sex, they contended, would be enough to stir the compassion of any man of delicacy and feeling, be they a parent, soldier, or

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simply someone with a sense of empathy.The specter of destitution held a far greater weight for single European and Eurasian women compared to their male counterparts. This disparity stemmed from the deep-seated fear that economic hardship would inevitably push these women towards prostitution. The very notion of European or Eurasian women serving a native male clientele was particularly repugnant to British sensibilities, a reflection of the prevailing racial hierarchies of the colonial era.

Furthermore,the role of the Englishwoman in India during the 19th century was a carefully constructedperformance. Expected to embody the ideals of domesticity and femininity, she served as a cornerstone of the British civilizing mission. Beyond her wifely duties, she was also an unwitting ambassador for British imperialism, projecting an image of cultural and racial superiority within the colonial landscape[11].The social safety net for destitute women and girls in colonial India exhibited a distinct racial hierarchy. Women classified as Eurasian, with a perceived closer proximity to European ancestry, benefited more from this network compared to those perceived as less European. Extended families, government-sponsored orphanages, and missionary organizations all played a crucial role in 'mopping up,' a term highlighting the urgency of intervention, these vulnerable populations.

Prior to 1833, the East India Company implemented a stringent system to regulate the entry of women into British India. This system aimed to exert control over the colonial population and mitigate potential social disruptions. To obtain permission to travel to India, miss Maria Sharman, who received permission in 1822, required two key elements: a significant financial bond of approximately £200 and two guarantors willing to assume legal responsibility for her conduct and well-being.The story of miss Serman who secured permission to travel to India in 1822 exemplifies the complexities of navigating life as a European woman within the colonial social order. The East India Company's regulations, demanding a hefty bond and guarantors, underscore their desire to control the demographics of British India. Having cleared this hurdle, the woman likely conformed to the prevailing social script. Her India-born status, possible English education, and perhaps even a brother's involvement in the lucrative indigo industry might have bolstered her social standing. However, the ultimate goal for European women like her was marriage, ideally to a high-ranking official like a company surgeon. This emphasis on marital status highlights the precarious position of single European women, who often faced pressure to leave India if they failed to find a husband.

The colonial orphanage system in India presented a bifurcated path for the daughters of deceased officers. Those born to European officers, presumed to be of purer European descent, were often sent back to Britain. This suggests a desire to preserve their European identity and potentially reintegrate them into British society.In contrast, the daughters of Eurasian and European soldiers of 'other ranks' faced a different reality. These girls, likely perceived as having a more diluted European heritage, were equipped with dowries and trained for specific vocations. Some became domestic servants, while others were placed as school teachers or seamstresses. This vocational training aimed to equip them with skills for self-sufficiency and potentially upward mobility within the colonial social hierarchy.

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The orphanages themselves housed girls who might remain there for their entire lives. These young women assumed various roles within the institution. They assisted in caring for younger children, likely replicating the nurturing they themselves lacked. Additionally, they contributed to the daily upkeep by making clothing, demonstrating their training in reading, knitting, spinning, and all kinds of plain work. This practical skillset further prepared them for potential domestic roles outside the orphanage.The colonial orphanage system in India revealed a stratified approach to caring for orphaned daughters. While European officers' daughters were potentially repatriated, daughters of 'other ranks' were equipped with vocational skills and expected to contribute to the colonial social order, either through domestic service, education, or needlework. The lives of those who remained in the orphanage highlight the institution's reliance on their labor while offering them basic literacy and practical skills.

Anthony's research delves into the intricacies of analyzing historical data pertaining to Eurasian destitution in colonial India. He draws upon sources like Henry Gidney's 1923 accounts in The Statesman, which depict impoverished Anglo-Indian families in Calcutta (Anthony, 1962, pp. 112-13). These portrayals paint a grim picture of a marginalized community struggling with poverty. However, Anthony critically examines the causes assigned to this phenomenon. He specifically addresses Gidney's contention that the British government's Indianisation policy, which aimed to increase Indian participation in civil service, was solely responsible for the plight of Eurasians. Figures like Bishop Cotton and Governor-General Lord Canning expressed anxieties about potential social problems caused by orphaned or unemployed Eurasians, but concrete evidence of widespread destitution during this period is elusive and it is uncertain whether they actual witnessed such sights (Cotton, 1872). Furthermore, the Calcutta prostitution statistics from 1880, with their relatively low numbers of Eurasian women, might be misleading. Anthony suggests that destitute Eurasians could have been reclassified as "natives" in official records. This potential for miscategorisation raises questions about the accuracy of the data and the true extent of Eurasian poverty.

RESULTS
Fig 1

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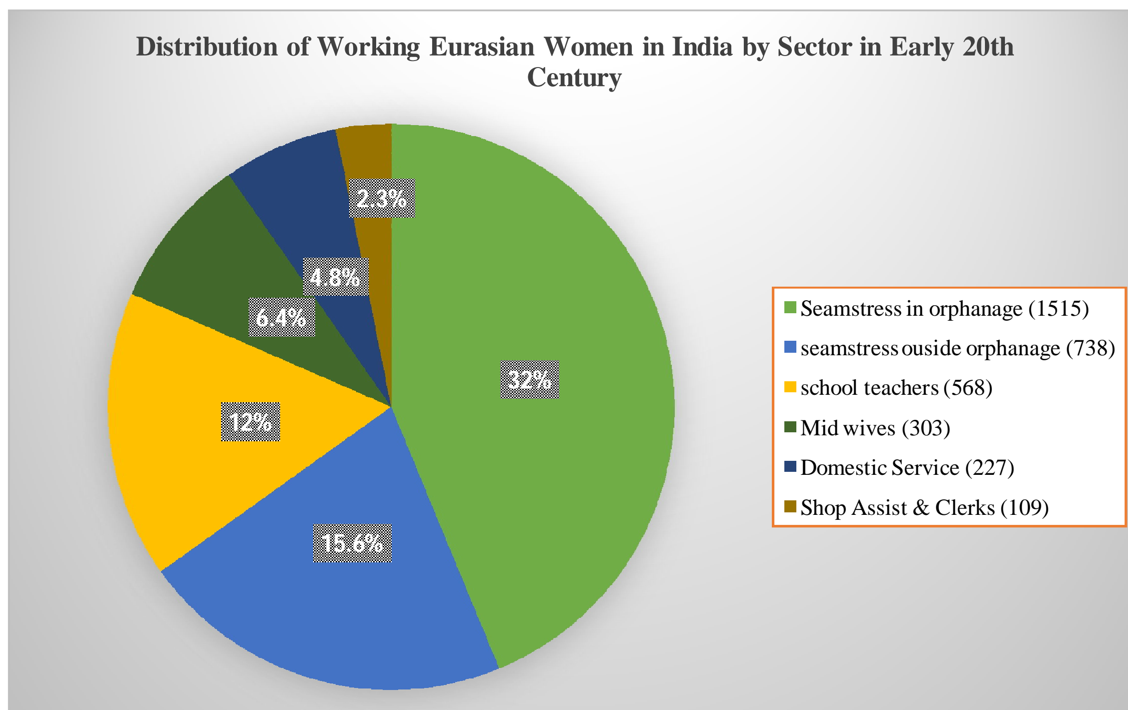

Data Sources: *Madras Census Report of 1901, Govt. of British India*

The pie chart illustrates the estimated distribution of working Eurasian women in 19th century India, derived from the Madras Census Report of 1901. Based on this report, and considering that approximately one-third of the estimated 73,879 Eurasian population in British India were female, there were roughly 24,626 Eurasian women in the country. The Madras census data further suggests that 19.23% of these women were employed, totaling approximately 4,733. The pie chart details their distribution across various sectors, but it is important to note that this data is incomplete, as many sectors employing Eurasian women are not represented in census. Therefore, the actual number of working Eurasian women during this period might be higher than indicated.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The study's findings have several implications for future research. It suggests that further investigation into the lives of Eurasian women in other regions of India could reveal regional variations in employment patterns and social mobility. Additionally, a comparative analysis of Eurasian women's experiences with those of their European and Indian counterparts could shed light on the complex interplay of race, gender, and class in colonial India. Moreover, exploring the long-term impact of these early employment opportunities on the socio-economic status of Eurasian women and their descendants could provide valuable insights into the legacy of colonialism in India.

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CONCLUSION

The 19th century in India witnessed significant social and economic transformations for Eurasian women, arguably even more impactful than those experienced by their male counterparts. However, societal biases played a far more defining role in shaping their lives. Early on, Eurasian women were stereotypically seen as potential brides for British expatriates, much like Eurasian men were typecast as clerical workers. Yet, as infrastructure developed, new opportunities emerged for both genders. It's important to note that British men traditionally enjoyed the freedom to abandon their Eurasian families. While there may have been a shift towards discouraging such marriages, there's no evidence of discontent among Eurasian women regarding this change. The 19th century witnessed a gradual expansion of employment opportunities for Eurasian women in India, offering alternatives to traditional dependence on marriage for economic security. The 1901 Madras Presidency census revealed a significant number – 1,680 – of Eurasian women employed across various sectors. Notably, nearly a third were working within orphanages, institutions that had previously excluded them. This shift likely reflects a growing emphasis on equipping young women with practical skills. Many received training in areas like sewing and millinery, enabling them to contribute to their families' well-being or support themselves independently.

Furthermore, the educational advancements within the Eurasian community are evident in the rise of women working as schoolteachers, midwives, and hospital nurses. By the early 20th century, Eurasian women had come to hold a dominant position in these professions. Extrapolating from Madras data, it can be estimated that across India, between a quarter and a fifth of adult Eurasian women were employed. Notably, even married women, particularly in nursing and midwifery, often continued working, contributing significantly to their household income.

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DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) at this moment declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (Chat GPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of manuscripts.

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This was based only on the three districts with the largest Eurasian populations: Madras City, Malabar, and Chingleput. H.H. Risley and E.A. Gait, *Report on the Census Of India. 1901*, Government Printing Press, Calcutta,1903, p. 21

Ibid.

Several Indian Census reports confirm that many Eurasians returned themselves (or were returned by others) as Europeans.
English women in India stereotyped Indian women as devoted to family and as sensuous mistresses in need of help from colonial civilizers.
For examples, see 'An Indo-British Nurse'. *The Times*, 13 November 1877, Issue 29,098, p.3, col. B; and 'An Eurasian Nurse', *The Times*, 22 September 1882, Issue 30,619, p. 11, col.
Bell's system encouraged responsibility in older pupils, but mainly provided cheap teachers. It was widely adopted in India in native and Eurasian schools throughout the century. See Joseph Fox, *A Comparative View of the Plans of Education of Dr Bell and Mr Lancaster*, privately published, London,1809
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