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## **Constructing Communities of Affection and Devotion: The Role of Churches in India**

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### **1. Introduction**

This paper concerns Christian communities that were constructed around churches in India and which formed core spaces in metropolitan cities during the age of globalisation. It also examines the role of churches by exploring the various activities conducted by both the clergy and the congregation. Among these activities, I will especially focus on church choirs as an indispensable part of Mass, liturgy, or any rituals and gatherings. I will also discuss Christian schools, as the education brought by Christian missionaries seems to have played an important role in propagating Christian principles and consolidating Christian communities.

Over the past two decades, Christians living in metropolitan cities in India have faced more serious problems and difficulties than ever before. Recently, anti-Christian violence has been increasing as a result of communal tension between Christians and Hindus. Additionally, as this religious exclusiveness spreads across India, city dwellers who are primarily immigrants who have left their native villages, regularly encounter many difficulties in daily life, ranging from a lack of assistance, cooperation, collaboration, and communication as well as an inability to access a secure safety net that should have been provided by the government.

To explore how they attempt to overcome such a situation, I will first analyse Christian communities from the viewpoints of 'cohabitation', a concept proposed by Judith Butler [Butler 2006], and 'public sphere', redefined by Nancy Frazer [Frazer 1990]. Then, I will pay particular attention to the importance of Christians' mentality or sense of themselves, which helps to inspire a sense of belonging and unity, as well as the feeling of security that is provided by those

who share the same feelings of 'affection' and 'devotion'; a typically virtuous mentality prevalent among Christians. To understand how Christians enhance their sense of affection and devotion and how their communities consolidate their mutual relations I explain, based on my fieldwork carried out in Bangalore and Chennai, how church choirs allow the congregation to express themselves fully through singing, and how Christian schools educate young generations through extolling the benefits of charitable activities.

## 2. Christians as a Religious Minority

According to the 2011 census, the Christian population of India is approximately 24 million people, which constitutes approximately 2.3% of the total population. One report, however, states that the actual Christian population may reach as much as 5–7%, which is approximately 50 million people.<sup>1</sup> Other statistics state that the Catholic population of India is approximately 17 million,<sup>2</sup> despite Wikipedia giving this number as 11.8 million.<sup>3</sup> Although those who belong to the Catholic community are formally categorised into the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), many of them are actually Dalits, particularly the Tamil Christians. As Dalit Christians lost their rights in the reservation system in India because of their conversion from Hinduism, many Dalit Christians no longer talk openly about being Christians, even though they have been baptised. Today, it is important for Dalit Christians to lay claim to Christianity in order to force the government to recognize them as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and to continue including them into the reservation system.

Anti-conversion laws, enforced through the 'Freedom of Religion' Act, have been passed and enacted in several states in order to prevent forcible conversions, which have been conducted by Christian missionaries since the 1990s. The states that enacted such laws are Orissa (enacted in 1967), Madhya Pradesh (1968), Arunachal Pradesh (1978), Chhattisgarh (2000), Tamil Nadu (2002, but repealed in 2006), Gujarat (2003), Himachal Pradesh (2007), and Rajasthan (2008). Some Christian organisations have protested against the anti-conversion laws and their validity was challenged to the high courts of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. The Supreme Court supported these laws by expanding

the contents of Article 25 of the Indian Constitution<sup>4</sup> and suggesting that one has the right to propagate a particular religion, but not to propagate it in order to convert another [Suleman 2010]. The history of these types of laws can be traced back to the period of British rule, when anti-British nationalism spread across India. Today, these century-old laws have returned to modern India as a vehicle for persecuting religious minorities [Osuri 2013]. Thus, this type of law is very controversial and most Christian organisations have carefully ceased active propagation.

Incidents of anti-Christian violence have significantly increased since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came into political power in 1998. For example, Human Rights Watch states that between January 1998 and February 1999 the Indian Parliament reported a total of 116 incidents of attacks on Christians across the country [Human Rights Watch 1999]. This threat still continues. In Karnataka, where I usually conduct my fieldwork, it is well known that Bajrang Dal, the militant youth wing of Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), has attacked many churches since 2008.<sup>5</sup> In February 2015, a peace procession to protest against the church attacks was coordinated in Bangalore by thousands of Christians.<sup>6</sup> In March 2015, I visited Whitefield, a famous hub of the IT industry located at the east end of Bangalore City. During my fieldwork, I heard several reports of Christians being threatened with attacks from Hindu right-wing anti-Christian/anti-heathen organisations.

Whitefield was once a settlement of Anglo-Indians (also called Eurasians).<sup>7</sup> In 1889, Chamaraja Wodeyar, then Maharaja of Mysore, gave 3,900 acres of land to Anglo-Indian associations. In the early 1900s, there were approximately 45 houses in the area and this number quickly increased to 130. After the Indian Rebellion of 1857, several anti-miscegenation laws were passed, and Anglo-Indians were denigrated by both the British and the Indians. Many factors, including intermarriages, cuisine, dress, and English school systems, have fostered an Anglo-centric culture. In particular, Christianity helped bind their sense of community. Many Anglo-Indians left India after independence to seek a new life in the UK and other commonwealth countries [Muthiah 2013; Pani et al. 2010: 59–113]. Today, there are 80,000–125,000 Anglo-Indians living in India.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 2.1 CSI Memorial Church, Whitefield, 2015



Figure 2.2 Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Whitefield, 2015



Since the Anglo-Indians still living in Whitefield are few in number, mostly elderly, and their children have emigrated to the UK, the US, and other countries, over 90% of the total population of Whitefield now consists of outsiders, with the current residents including foreigners and immigrants from other Indian states and neighbouring countries. CSI (The Church of South India)<sup>9</sup> Memorial Church (Figure 2.1)<sup>10</sup> is the oldest church in Whitefield, and was built by the European and Anglo-Indian Association 'Madras' in 1886. Our Lady of Lourdes Church (Figure 2.2), a Catholic church located in the central part of Whitefield, was built by an Anglo-Indian lady, Mrs Rose White, in 1894. This church has been newly renovated, and it attracts a large congregation today. During my visit there, I

heard from one of the residents that Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) had distributed fliers telling people to re-convert to Hinduism or die. An Anglo-Indian lady told me that because of her fear of attacks she rarely goes out, except to attend the Sunday Mass held at Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

In addition to this, racial attacks on foreigners, particularly on Africans<sup>11</sup> and Northeast Indians,<sup>12</sup> are increasing. A recent example to appear in public media is that of four Tanzanian students, including a woman, who were attacked in Bangalore on 31 January 2016.<sup>13</sup> These incidents were perpetrated by educated but unemployed youths who have assumed that as a result of globalisation, they cannot get a good job because foreigners and immigrants have stolen their opportunities. Today, people lament that although Bangalore, a metropolitan city with a cosmopolitan touch, was once called the safest city in India, those days are now over.

### **3. Church Community**

The Pope, clergy, catechists, pastors, and other Christian leaders and researchers continue to speak of the importance of consolidating the 'church community'. The nature of the 'church community' is characterized by significant theological virtue, namely 'caritas' in Latin or 'charity' in English, which can be explained as the love of God and love of man, including one's neighbour and one's self. In practice, charity means voluntary actions that help or serve people. However, I prefer to use the word 'affection' instead of charity to focus on the ethical side of the mental aspects of the clergy and congregation. The word 'affection' is popularly used to denote a feeling of parental and social love without the sensual elements caused by impulsive or sudden emotions. As the church community is also consolidated by a love of God, in addition to ethical affection, the liturgy practiced in church is explained as devotional action toward God. Thus, feelings of affection and devotion have been fostered among those who participate in church activities.

In the case of Catholicism, the Second Vatican Council clearly declared the importance of the Apostolate of the Laity as indispensable for all faithful Christians, including congregations as well as Christian leaders, and it should be

motivated by charity, namely affection and devotion at a practical level. The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* [The Second Vatican Council 1965b] states the following:

Article 1: 'the apostolate of the laity derives from their Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it'

Article 3: 'on all Christians therefore is laid the preeminent responsibility of working to make the divine message of salvation known and accepted by all men throughout the world'

Article 8: 'while every exercise of the apostolate should be motivated by charity, some works by their very nature can become specially vivid expressions of this charity'

As we can find in above articles, all Christians should perform the apostolate with a sense of charity.

The most important church activity is the regular liturgy conducted in chapels and basilicas, namely Mass in Catholicism, Holy Communion in CSI, and the Eucharist in other Christian denominations, where congregations come together to worship God. In the case of Catholic church, Article 42 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, says that, 'the liturgical life of the parish and its relationship to the bishop must be fostered theoretically and practically among the faithful and clergy; efforts also must be made to encourage a sense of community within the parish, above all in the common celebration of the Sunday Mass' [The Second Vatican Council 1963]. In other words, liturgy is the central activity of a Christian's life and can be effective in consolidating the community by fostering a sense of unity and integration.

Although Bangalore is the capital city of Karnataka, speakers of Kannada, its official language, are not in the majority. According to the 1991 census, the most common languages spoken in Bangalore were: Kannada (38%), Tamil (28%), Telugu (17%), Urdu (13%), Malayalam (3%), and Hindi (2.5%).<sup>14</sup> This language composition has caused people to speak English and Hindi in daily life. Today, the growing population and greater prospects of non-Kannada speakers, such

Figure 2.3 St. Peters Church, Bangalore, 2015



Figure 2.4 Choir Members of the St. Peters Church, Bangalore, 2015



as foreigners and immigrants from other Indian states, is gradually provoking the antipathy of Kannada speakers, and this has led to threats to the safety of non-Kannada speakers' living in Bangalore. As I mentioned earlier, the increasing number of racially motivated attacks by young, unemployed Kannada speakers is a result of their belief that job opportunities are being taken by foreigners and immigrants.<sup>15</sup>

As a result of this population composition, churches usually conduct the liturgy in various languages, including English, Kannada, Tamil, and other Indian languages, with different time slots for each. For example, the Mass schedule for St. Peter's Church (Figure 2.3 & 2.4), built in 1938, are as follows.<sup>16</sup>

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 6.30 a.m.: Mass in English

Wednesday, 6.30 p.m.: Mass in English (St. Alphonsa Novena)

Friday, 6.00 p.m.: Adoration & Mass in English (6.30 p.m.)

1<sup>st</sup> Friday, 6.00 p.m.: Sacred Heart Adoration, healing, and Mass followed by snacks

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday, 6.00 p.m.: Mass in English

7.00 p.m.: Marian devotion at the grotto (tri-lingual)

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 6.30 p.m.: Mass in Tamil

Saturday, 6.30 p.m.: Mass in English (Sunday liturgy)

Sunday, 7.30 a.m.: Mass in Tamil and Kannada (catechism for children)

9.30 a.m.: Mass in English (catechism for children)

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Children's Mass (inclusive)

As you can see above, English is the dominant language used in daily Masses held at the St. Peter's Church and Masses in Tamil and Kannada are held occasionally.

The Mass schedule for the Infant Jesus Church and Shrine (Figure 2.5 & 2.6), built in 1969, are as follows:<sup>17</sup>

Sunday, 5.45 a.m.: Tamil; 7.00 a.m.: English; 8.30 a.m.: Tamil; 10.00 a.m.:

Kannada; 11.15 a.m.: Tamil; 5.00 p.m.: English; 6.00 p.m.: Tamil

Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, 5.45 a.m.: Kannada;

6:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.: Tamil; 6:00 p.m.: English

Wednesday, 5.45 a.m.: Kannada; 6:30 a.m.: English; 11:15 a.m.: Tamil;

6:00 p.m.: Mass followed by Adoration in Tamil

Thursday (Novena Masses) 'Special day dedicated to the Infant Jesus'

5.45 a.m.: Tamil & English; 6.30 a.m.: English; 9.00 a.m.: Telugu;

10.00 a.m.: Kannada; 11.15 a.m.: Tamil; 4.00 p.m.: Konkani;

5.00 p.m.: English; 6.00 p.m.: Tamil; 7.30 p.m.: Malayalam

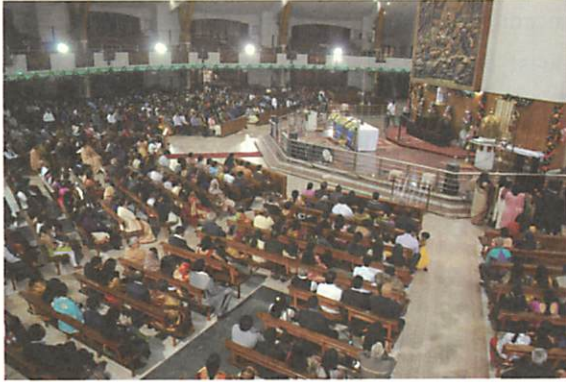
In comparison with St. Peter's Church, the Infant Jesus Church has a much larger congregation, and English, Tamil, and Kannada are used in daily Masses



Figure 2.5 Infant Jesus Church &amp; Shrine, Bangalore, 2013



Figure 2.6 Mass Held at the Infant Jesus Church, Bangalore, 2013



there. In addition, Telugu, Konkani, and Malayalam are also used in special Masses held every Thursday.

As we can find from the above examples, the space in one church is shared by a variety of ethnic/language groups. Although they share one space, they are divided into smaller ethnic/language congregations with different Masses performed in their own languages. Thus, ostensibly united congregations belonging to one church are practically characterised by a substantial lack of communication between several congregations. In other words, through proper allotment of time, several different groups in regard to language can share a particular space without any trouble arising between them.

This condition may be explained by the concept of 'co-habitation'. Judith Butler, in her argument on the public sphere, explains that all habitation is always cohabitation and always fragile, and she argues that we must actively seek to preserve 'the non-chosen character of inclusive and plural cohabitation' [Butler 2006]. This suggests to us the fragility of relations among the plural congregations, even though they are all Christians. I should highlight that, particularly in metropolitan and cosmopolitan cities like Bangalore, a multilingual church community is not always a single community but, rather, it is often composed of different congregations that have their own worship services and their own clergy who conduct the liturgy in their own language, even though they co-habit the same parish and belong to the same parish church where they share a single space at different times. Mutual relations between these congregations are often missing or not visible in church activities. At least on the surface, Christians belonging to the same parish church seem to maintain relatively peaceful cohabitation because of the successful and careful conduct of liturgy; however, we should not forget what Butler points out concerning the fragility of cohabitation.

Another characteristic of the church community today can be explained by appropriating the concept of the public sphere. Nancy Frazer claimed that marginalised groups form their own public spheres, and she named this concept a 'subaltern counter-public' or 'counterpublics' [Frazer 1990]. No single, common universal public sphere exists, but there are several counterpublics that are created in the face of hegemonic dominance. However, I would like to suggest that the public sphere that is constructed by marginalised Christians in India today may be characterised not as a collection of counterpublics, but of 'defensive-publics' that defend their own internal peaceful lives and do not possess a 'counter' attitude. As Christians are facing difficulties, as I wrote previously, and they have no powerful tools with which to change their situations, they maintain a considerable silence toward the outside world and make efforts to protect their safety in daily life. They have not shown any aggressive or offensive attitudes towards non-Christians, except for occasional peace processions. Rather, they seem to have tried to preserve and protect

their own church communities instead of demanding a public safety net provided by the government.

Thanks to the efforts of the lay apostolate in Catholic churches and the priesthood of all believers in Protestant churches, a hierarchy inside a single ethnic/language congregation is denied, and those who support church activities can help each other and cooperate with the clergy and pastor. Under such a comparatively egalitarian system, those who participate in church activities can consolidate mutual relations through strengthening a sense of affection and devotion, instead of impulsive emotion. This is in stark contrast to the fragility of cohabitation where one common space is shared without mutual relations. Thus, Indian churches today can be said to have achieved considerable success with cohabitation, overcoming ethnic/language differences and constructing a community of affection and devotion.

#### **4. Inculturation of Church Music**

While Protestant missionaries had no restrictions on using the native language and adopting indigenous customs, the Catholic missionaries sometimes imposed Latin on the natives. The Second Vatican Council was convoked by Pope John XXIII to 'open up the windows and let the fresh air in', that is, to formally commence the promotion of 'inculturation' in Catholicism. What is the official Vatican statement on this and how has it been practiced in India since then?

Article 36 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, says that, 'since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended', Article 113 says that, 'liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly in song, with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people. As regards the language to be used, the provisions of Art. 36 are to be observed; for the Mass, Art. 54; for the sacraments, Art. 63; for the divine office, Art. 101'. These articles clearly state that the Vatican completely desisted imposing one specific style of worship as the formal one and allowed churches all over the world to

be free to choose their native language for conducting Masses.

The Vatican also refers to music, as can be seen in the following Articles. Article 119 says that, 'in certain parts of the world, especially mission lands, there are peoples who have their own musical traditions, and these play a great part in their religious and social life. For this reason, due importance is to be attached to their music, and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius, as indicated in Art. 39 and 40'.

The Vatican also admits so-called 'freedom of expression' and admires artistic expressions from any region and any time. Article 123 says that:

'The Church has not adopted any particular style of art as her very own; she has admitted styles from every period according to the natural talents and circumstances of peoples, and the needs of various rites. Thus, in the course of the centuries, she has brought into being a treasury of art which must be very carefully preserved. The art of our own days, coming from every race and region, shall also be given free scope in the Church, provided that it adorns the sacred buildings and holy rites with due reverence and honor; thereby it is enabled to contribute its own voice to that wonderful chorus of praise in honor of the Catholic faith sung by great men in times gone by' [The Second Vatican Council 1963].

Consequently, the Second Vatican Council formally announced that the Church approves of all art that can be best used for the liturgy, allows the use of the vernacular in the Mass and the sacraments, and even encourages the use of the vernacular in the readings and common prayer. Accordingly, the music of native peoples is adapted for use in the liturgy of churches, and missionaries have been encouraged to learn indigenous musical traditions. Thereafter, no prohibition has been imposed upon the musical styles used in the liturgy [Duncan 1999: 5-7]. This decision brought a great change to Christian music in Catholic churches.

The term 'inculturation', which means to adopt indigenous customs, has

taken a firm hold as a principle in churches in India. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) was established as a permanent association for Catholic bishops of India. It was formally constituted in September 1944 at the Conference of Metropolitans held in Madras. In 1962, the CBCI headquarters were transferred from Bangalore to its present centre in New Delhi. In October 1966, the CBCI decided to open a centre to organise and induce liturgical and catechetical renewal in India, and consequently instituted the Commissions for Catechetics and Liturgy. The Liturgical Commission and the National Centre for Catechetics and Liturgy in Bangalore were established at a general meeting held in October 1966 at New Delhi. In 1971, the Centre's area of service and research was broadened and it became known as the National Biblical, Catechetical, and Liturgical Centre. It is now an all-India institution established in Bangalore to promote and coordinate the renewal of Christian life in the Church according to the principles outlined by the Second Vatican Council [Anderson 2009].<sup>18</sup>

In 1968, a sub-commission for music discussed how vernacular language and indigenous music could be adapted to the liturgical process. It is worth highlighting that bishops did not enforce a particular style of music on any community, but rather allowed the use of indigenous music and musical instruments to help the local community [Anderson 2009: 9-11]. After the Second Vatican Council, a number of bishops began intensively learning either Hindustani (North Indian classical) or Carnatic (South Indian classical) music and composing devotional songs for genres in which the popular styles of Hindu devotional song called *bhajan* and *kirtana* are preferred. These songs were recorded and CDs and cassettes of the pieces are sold widely.

Today, the Christian music of India greatly varies in both musical form and language. When we visit major churches in metropolitan cities such as Bangalore and elsewhere, the Mass is held in various languages, particularly on festival days. The music performed by the choir and the clergy and congregation's prayers and hymns vary in accordance with the language used, even from one church to another, as I referred to before. Accordingly, congregations of different ethnicities/languages can enjoy songs and join

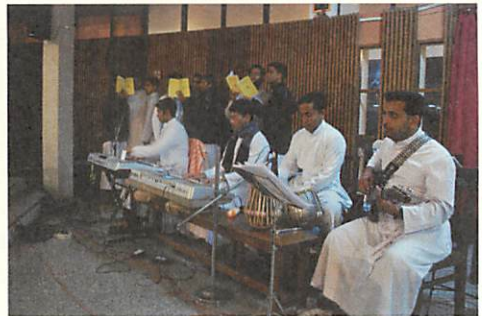
Figure 2.7 Chapel of the Dharmaram College, Bangalore, 2010



Figure 2.8 CD of Fr. Joy Kakkanattu



Figure 2.9 Music Group of the Dharmaram College, Bangalore, 2010



Source: The jacket of CD "Jesus the Good Way." Dharmaram College, Bangalore.

together to sing with the choir.

I will briefly describe various examples of church music I have encountered through my fieldwork. Dharmaram College in Bangalore is a major seminary for Syro-Malabar Christians.<sup>19</sup> They are very much indigenised, in not only their rites but also their designs: the picture of Jesus on the chapel building looks like a *yogin*: a Hindu saint in meditation sitting cross-legged and making a special hand gesture (Figure 2.7). Inside the chapel, we can find several pictures of similar Hindu design. In the Christmas decorations in the garden in front of the chapel building, a statue of Mary greatly resembles that of an Indian woman. The devotional songs in Malayalam are composed by Fr. Joy



Figure 2.10 Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Bangalore, 2012



Figure 2.11 Lyric of a Kannada Christian Song Composed by Fr. Chasara

[ಚಾಸರಾ]

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Source: The inner sleeve of CD  
 "Preethiyaswamige." Our Lady of  
 Lourdes Church, Bangalore.

Kakkanattu (Figure 2.8), one of the staff members of the college, and are sung by college students to the accompaniment of a tabla (a pair of drums), keyboard, guitar, and violin (Figure 2.9). In December 2010, I observed during my fieldwork that after Christmas Mass was over, the congregation walked around the chapel building in a clockwise direction, similar to the practice of Hindus after they have worshipped inside the temple.

The Christmas Mass of the Syro-Malabar Christians is also held at other churches for the Malayalam-speaking congregation in Bangalore. A staff member of Dharmaram College is sent there to conduct the Mass. One such church, Our Lady of Lourdes Church (Figure 2.10), is basically a large Catholic church located the central area of Bangalore, and is where Masses in several languages such as English, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi are held. The church's worship songs in Kannada composed by Fr. Chasara are completely indigenised, involving conventional expressions of Hindu mantras such as 'Aum śanti śanti śanti' (Figure 2.11). English songs sung during English Masses are world-famous Christmas songs such as 'Silent Night', 'Jingle Bells',

Figure 2.12 “Gītam”, Rāga Malahari, Tala Rūpaka, Originally Composed by Purandara Dāsa, Tamil Lyric on the Christian Theme by Renuka Suresh

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Source: Lakshmi Bay 2008: 24.

‘In Excelsis Gloria’, and ‘Joy to the World’. The Malayalam repertoire sung in the Malayalam Mass is the same as that used at Dharmaram College.

The method of training in music is also interesting. Tamil-speaking Christian students learning Carnatic music has become a common phenomenon today. *Gītas* composed by Purandara Dāsa (1484–1564), a prominent composer widely regarded as ‘the father of Carnatic music’, are the most popular pieces for beginners. Although the original lyrics of his *gītas* concerned praising Hindu gods and goddesses, the lyrics have been changed to praise Jesus, but the music remains the same (Figure 2.12). It is likely that an experiment of this kind was first attempted by Abraham Pandithar (1859–1919), a Tamil musicologist, in his book entitled *Karnāmiritta Cākarat Tirattu: A Practical Course in South Indian Music for Beginners* [Inoue 2006: 192].<sup>20</sup> Pandithar was also famous for reconstructing the history of Tamil music with reference to writings in the Old Testament and for organising music conferences as early as the 1910s.

## 5. Church Choir

The word ‘community’ is defined as a group of people that gather for a reason:



in the case of church choirs, this is to remember, recall, share, or create new experiences within a chorus or a group [Ahluquist 2006: 3]. It is better to broadly define a choir or chorus as a simple kind of group singing together in an Indian context. Most church choir members have no experience of any formal training in Western music, and they often sing in unison but not in harmony. However, the accompanists include both self-trained amateur musicians and semi-professional musicians who have received formal training. In any case, the choir definitely plays one of the most important roles in worship services conducted in Indian churches. Unlike Christian liturgies, Hindu temple rituals are exclusively performed by professional priests and ritual music is played by temple musicians while devotees generally visit temples and simply offer prayers to gods. As I said previously, Article 113 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, says that 'liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly in song with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people'. Thus, Christians are required to positively and actively participate in the liturgy.

In Western countries, some church choirs sing full liturgies, but this is rarely performed in India. The main role of Indian church choirs is to lead the singing in which the congregation participates. In addition to this, the Indian church choirs sing before the worship services conducted by clergy and in intervals while the liturgy is ongoing. Thus, singing during worship service is not only an opportunity to present the results of their practice, but also an opportunity to express their affectionate and devotional feelings. All choirs have a more or less fixed membership, although anyone who wants to sing can become a member. Once becoming a member, they all obligatorily attend rehearsals, as the choir has a responsibility to lead the congregation in singing during the worship services. Through singing together, the mental aspect of enjoyment, self-expression, and responsibility that serves to consolidate the choir fosters the solidarity of the congregation.

As the choir plays a central role in the worship services, churches can be venues for educating all people in music and for training amateur singers. In contrast to the traditional *gurukula* (a type of residential school with pupils

Figure 2.13 Majolly Music Trust Choir, Bangalore, 2015



living near the guru) system of education used to train experts in Hindu religious music, musical education for all is conducted in church choirs. As I referenced before, it can be surmised that this is a result of the efforts of the lay apostolate in Catholic churches and the priesthood of all believers in Protestant churches.

Although there are few professional choirs in India, the Shillong Chamber Choir, founded in 2001 in Shillong, Meghalaya, is an exception. This choir won a reality TV show, *India's Got Talent*, in 2010 and, since then, they have received several awards and toured the US, the UK, Europe, and other Eastern Asian countries. Although there is no professional choir in Bangalore, the Majolly Music Trust (MMT), founded in 2011 by Neevia Majolly, a well-known pianist, has two choirs: *Madrigals Etc.*, specializing in Renaissance music, and the MMT Choir (**Figure 2.13**), whose members are chosen by Majolly through auditions. They began training in 2011 for the purpose of performing Handel's 'Messiah'. Today, those who develop musical talent in church choirs have the opportunity to play an active part in the field of music.

## 6. Christian Schools and Education

Since the British period, Christian missionaries in India have established many schools. They have regarded education in schools as one of the most important missionary works. Introduction of Declaration on Christian Education,

Gravissimum Educationis, states that, 'to fulfill the mandate she has received from her divine founder of proclaiming the mystery of salvation to all men and of restoring all things in Christ, Holy Mother the Church must be concerned with the whole of man's life, even the secular part of it insofar as it has a bearing on his heavenly calling, and therefore she has a role in the progress and development of education'. Article 2 says that, 'this sacred synod recalls to pastors of souls their most serious obligation to see to it that all the faithful, but especially the youth who are the hope of the Church, enjoy this Christian education' [The Second Vatican Council 1965a].

Thus, the Vatican says that education for the youth is an indispensable process for raising faithful Christians.

Christian schools range from nursery schools to universities. Of these, in this chapter I will focus on a school for disabled children and a women's college.

### **6-1. Jyothi Seva Society**

The Jyothi Seva Home and School for Blind Children in Bangalore is run by the Congregation of Franciscan Sisters Servants of the Cross, which has its roots in Poland and was established in 1918 by a blind nun, Mother Elizabeth Roza Czacka. She devoted her life to rehabilitating the blind and helping them to integrate themselves into society. The Jyothi Seva Society began in a rented house in 1989 and soon moved to a detached house. Registered in 1991, today the Jyothi Seva Home has accommodation for 100 children from the ages of three to 25. There are 22 orphans there, in addition to others who come from very poor families or from the slums and villages surrounding Bangalore or other states. There are children who are multi-disabled and others who are grappling with abandonment. The vision of Jyothi Seva is as follows:<sup>21</sup>

1. To care for the upbringing, education, and rehabilitation of visually impaired children,
2. To assist blind/multi-disabled children and adults at the Jyothi Seva Society to live a healthy, productive life at home and later as responsible adults/professionals.

The mission is as follows:

Figure 2.14 Jyothi Seva School Choir, Bangalore, 2015



1. Helping our blind citizens grow to be independent/successful/well-groomed personalities, able to identify their unique place in society through their gifts and their 'special challenges'.
2. Helping them find suitable professions.
3. Building inter-socio-religious-harmony: here we have Hindus, Muslims, and Christians living as brothers and sisters.

The society's motto is 'Into the Light with Wisdom and Cheer!' and the core belief is 'every individual is supremely important to God and to man'.

Jyothi Seva School is dedicated to the education and rehabilitation of visually challenged children from nursery classes up to the 7th standard. All blind children are given an education, boarding, food, clothing, medical care, and all other care free of charge. Older children receive inclusive education at a neighbouring high school, and they choose a college when they are ready.

The children are educated in accordance with the secondary-school leaving certificate syllabus, but they have additional classes in various skills required by the visually challenged: braille, orientation and mobility, computers, and daily living skills. Furthermore, the children are encouraged to choose extra-curricular activities, which may include Indian music, Western music, dance, and drama. Many of the alumni choose to retain their close links with Jyothi Seva. Four of the primary school teachers are blind, and three of these are former students of Jyothi Seva.

Jyothi Seva Society has a home and a rehabilitation centre for visually challenged girls at Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu. Young women are taught knitting, handicrafts, and other skills. This home also serves as a place for the holidays for orphans and students from the school. On 31st May 2013, the society opened a school for the blind in Nongbah Village, Jowai District, Meghalaya.

The Jyothi Seva School Choir (Figure 2.14) is divided into two groups: juniors and seniors. The repertoire of the choir includes carols, hymns, and other Christian songs as well as secular songs in English, Kannada, and Hindi. Music training, which is conducted by the blind choirmaster who was trained in music and became a staff member at this school, is held daily for approximately one hour. The choirmaster plays an electric keyboard and sings one phrase, which the children immediately repeat. The choir often holds concerts and participates in choir festivals. Today, the choir is famous not only in Bangalore but outside of the city for its well-trained choral singing.

Through observing the choir's training and performance and interviewing the blind choirmaster, the choir can be evaluated as one of the typical collective expressions of solidarity that has been fostered through affection and devotion. The children not only enjoy choir music, but also express themselves through singing. They can develop a sense of belonging to a community that is built around affection and devotion and where they are protected and can believe in security. In addition, this is effective for strengthening their solidarity, as those who have been brought up in the Jyothi Seva School often continue to serve later students in the school.

## 6-2. The Women's Christian College

The Women's Christian College<sup>22</sup> was founded in 1915 as a joint venture of 12 missionary societies from England and the USA that is known as CSI today. It began with 41 students and 7 faculty members. The college was shifted to its present campus in Nungambakkam, a central part of Madras (Chennai) in 1916. Within the first week of its opening, the college motto, 'Lighted to Lighten' was chosen; the college flower, the sunflower (the flower of light) was selected; the college crest was designed; and the college song, 'Alma mater' was set to the

Figure 2.15 Women's Christian College Choir, Chennai, 2013



tune of *Finlandia*, composed by Sibelius. It is affiliated with the University of Madras and was recognized as an autonomous college in 1982. At present, the college has approximately 3224 students and 180 faculty members with 108 non-teaching staff, and is a state subsidised minority institution following the choice-based credit system.

The founder-principal, Eleanor McDougall (1873–1956), was a British lady famous for her career in women's education. She stated the aim of the college as: 'We can do no better service to India, than to liberate the energies of wisdom and devotion, which are latent in a woman and to infuse into them the vital ideals of Christianity'. The college has fulfilled its mission to provide higher education to women of India in liberal arts and sciences. The college has also been collaborating with similar institutions in both India and abroad. Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, USA, has adopted Women's Christian Collage as its sister college.

The Women's Christian College Choir (Figure 2.15) is so highly reputed that choir members are chosen through auditions. The choirmaster said that those who have good voices can be chosen as members, regardless of whether or not they can read staff notation. The music training conducted by a choirmaster, a professional teacher of Western music, is held at the college chapel daily for approximately one hour. The choirmaster distributes a piece of song text with staff notation to choir members and plays the acoustic piano.



Using his piano accompaniment, choir members practice singing. One of the choir members can also play the piano well and sometimes provides the piano accompaniment instead of the choirmaster. She told me that she was planning to take the Music Grade Exam for piano conducted by Trinity College London,<sup>23</sup> which can be taken widely in India. There are no chairs in the chapel; all members must sit on the floor and practice as Indian traditional musicians do. Since members come from all over India, English has automatically become the only common language. Consequently, the choir's repertoire is dominated by English songs, but Tamil songs are also added in order to entertain the local people. The Women's Christian College sometimes organises a 'Festival of Choirs' as a fund-raising program. Several choirs of national and international repute participate in the festival.

Although the members of the Women's Christian College Choir are multi-lingual/multi-ethnic and most of them met for the first time when they entered the college, they have cultivated their friendship by singing together daily in the college chapel. As they are also specially chosen from many applicants through auditions, they are proud of being choir members and this can strengthen their sense of belonging.

## 7. Conclusion

In this paper I discussed how Christians, including the clergy and congregation, are developing a sense of affection and devotion in communities and focusing on constructing church communities in metropolitan cities in India. Today, Indian Christians are facing difficulties because of increasing anti-Christian violence caused by communal tension between Christians and Hindus. As their feelings of marginalisation in society are enhanced, they expect the church to protect them from threats brought by outsiders and to give them security.

By overcoming these situations, they consolidate the church community, whose central virtue is 'caritas' or 'charity', namely love of God and love of man. As I focus in this study on the ethical side and not the theological side, the use of the words 'affection and devotion' are a better explanation for the sense of belonging among the members of the congregation. The church is a space for

them to develop a 'defensive' public sphere for protecting themselves from outside dangers. However, the varieties of ethnic/language congregations, living in the same parish and having to share the space of one church, as can be seen in the different times for Mass/Holy Communion conducted in different languages, can be analysed through the concept of 'cohabitation'.

Since the choir plays the most important role in worship services, observation of church choirs serves to illustrate how Christians enhance their sense of affection and devotion and how church communities consolidate their mutual relations. According to my fieldwork, choirs, or even singing together as practice, are definitely effective for inspiring the aspects of enjoyment and self-expression that can foster a sense of belonging and security.

#### Notes

- 1) An Indian Christian (<http://anindianchristian.blogspot.jp/2013/01/percentage-of-christians-in-india.html>, accessed on Nov. 1, 2015).
- 2) The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church (<http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/sc1.html>, accessed on Nov. 1, 2015).
- 3) Wikipedia ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_India), accessed on Nov. 1, 2015).
- 4) Article 25 of the Indian Constitution, 'Freedom of Conscience and Free Profession, Practice and Propagation of Religion' says that: '(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion'.
- 5) Wikipedia ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Christian\\_violence\\_in\\_Karnataka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Christian_violence_in_Karnataka), accessed on Nov. 1, 2015).
- 6) NDTV (<http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/thousands-protest-on-bengaluru-streets-against-delhi-church-attacks-737546>, accessed on Nov. 1, 2015).
- 7) Article 366(2) of the Indian Constitution defines Anglo-Indian as: '(2) an Anglo Indian means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only'.
- 8) Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Indian>, accessed on Nov. 1, 2015).
- 9) CSI is the successor of the Church of England in India and was established after Indian Independence. It functions as a union of Anglican and Protestant churches in South India. With a membership of over four million, it is India's second largest Christian church after



the Catholic Church.

- 10) All photographs were taken by the author.
- 11) The Hindu, July 22, 2013 (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/african-students-allege-racial-discrimination-in-bangalore/article4938390.ece>, accessed on May 26, 2016). New Indian Express, Feb. 4, 2016 (<http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/7-Instances-When-African-Students-Were-Attacked-in-India/2016/02/04/article3261261.ece>, accessed on May 26, 2016)
- 12) The Hindu, Aug. 16, 2012 (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/after-rumours-northeast-people-flee-bangalore/article3776549.ece>, accessed on May 26, 2016). The Hindu, Oct. 15, 2014 (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/3-arrested-for-beating-up-northeast-students-in-bangalore/article6503332.ece>, accessed on May 26, 2016).
- 13) The Hindu, Feb. 4, 2016 (<http://www.thehindu.com/specials/attack-on-tanzanian-students-in-bengaluru/article8193802.ece>, accessed on May 26, 2016). BBC News Feb. 4, 2106 (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-35489899>, accessed on May 26, 2016).
- 14) 2016 World Population Review (<http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/bangalore-population/>, accessed on May 26, 2016).
- 15) Daily O (<http://www.dailyo.in/politics/bengaluru-language-kannada-racial-attacks-magadi-kempe-gowda/story/1/2590.html>, accessed on May 26, 2016).
- 16) St. Peter's Church (<http://www.stpetersparish.in/MASS.htm>, accessed on Nov. 1, 2015).
- 17) Infant Jesus Church and Shrine (<http://www.infantjesusbangalore.com/mass.html>, accessed on Nov. 1, 2015).
- 18) Basic information on the Catholic Bishops' Council is on the following website: (<http://cbci.in/default.aspx>, accessed on Nov. 1, 2015).
- 19) Dharmaram College (<http://www.dharmaram.in/>, accessed on Nov. 1, 2015)
- 20) This book was published in 1907 and is a song textbook with notation. It includes not only his compositions but also famous songs transposed with Christian lyrics.
- 21) Jyothi Seva Society (<http://jyothiseva.org/>, accessed on Nov. 1, 2015).
- 22) Women's Christian Collage (<http://wcc.edu.in/>, accessed on 26 May, 2016).
- 23) Trinity College London ([http://www.trinitycollege.com/site/?id=1044&utm\\_source=jump&utm\\_medium=web&utm\\_campaign=gradeexams](http://www.trinitycollege.com/site/?id=1044&utm_source=jump&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=gradeexams), accessed on May 26, 2016).

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