A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF AFRICANS, THEIR PRESENCE, AND ASSIMILATION IN AWADH

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Abstract

The phenomenon of Africans migrating from Africa to South Asia and other regions is well-known and extensively studied throughout history. People of African descent have voluntarily and forcefully migrated to India and occupied significant and influential positions within many empires and societies. The historical phenomenon of the African presence in the Awadh region was also significant. The Awadh has played a vital role in shaping the historical narrative of modern India. After the decline of the Mughal Empire, the emergence of the autonomous empire in Awadh corresponded with a substantial migration of Africans into this region. This paper concentrates on the historical relevance of the Africans in the context of Awadh, which includes their assimilation, their contribution to the rise of Awadh as a cosmopolitan empire in India, and their military participation in the events of 1857. During the city's siege and subsequent recapture in March 1858, people of African descent played crucial roles in the street-level conflict. This article seeks to do an academic exploration and revisit the historiography of Awadh while examining the complexities between social and cultural assimilation challenges and adaptations, as well as the transformational shifts that have altered the lives of the Africans in Awadh. Scholarly research has concentrated chiefly on aristocratic Africans, not everyday enslaved people and migrants. Their incorporation into Indian culture, primarily through marrying and cultural mixing, is little understood. The case of the African presence in Awadh challenges racial and authority myths, showing a flexible and cosmopolitan social framework. This historiography emphasizes cross-cultural interchange and illuminates a neglected African diaspora narrative in South Asia..

Keywords: African, Awadh, Assimilation,1857, Lucknow, Cross-culture.

Introduction

Throughout various historical periods, people of African descent came to India under different circumstances. Their significant role is evident and well-documented in various dynasties' socio-political and economic spheres in Indian history. Africans arrived in India as sailors, traders, soldiers, and enslaved people. They became part of the royal courts' military, political, and administrative spheres. Their extensive participation in court politics often pushed them to prominent positions, sometimes as kingmakers and even kings, as seen in the history of the Sachin and Janjira Kingdoms (Karmwar, 2013, p. 69).

The historical documentation of the African presence in India, particularly in the Deccan and Gujarat regions, is well documented. However, the acknowledgement of distinctive African groups in other regions of the country is minimal. In addition, the present historical research on Africans in India primarily concentrates on the "African Elites" while not considering the wider populace. In the royal court of Awadh, there was a peculiar scenario where many Africans were assimilated; it was very challenging to identify Africans solely based on their names. Understanding their situation, progression, and eventual decline in the kingdom relies heavily on sources explicitly mentioning their origins. Several distinguished African personalities have enriched the Indian subcontinent with their contributions. Among these notable figures is Jamaluddin Yakut, a highly regarded courtier who held an important post in the Kingdom of Delhi during the reign of the Razia Sultan.

Badr was an eminent figure who took on the governor role in the Alapur region. Among the notable people mentioned are Malik Kafur, Malik Ambar, Malik Sarwar, Mubarak Shah, Ibrahim Shah, Malik Andil, Malik Sandal, Yakub Dabuli Habsi, Ikhlas Khan, Dilawar Khan, Khavass Khan, and Ulugh Khan, to name a few. The people of African descent successfully consolidated their rule over the region of Bengal (Karmwar, 2010).

During the reign of Sultan Rukunuddin Barbakshah, ruler of Bengal from 1462 to 1481 CE, historical records demonstrate a substantial

number of enslaved Africans, estimated to be around 8000 people. Some enslaved Africans were able to achieve powerful official status. Subsequently, under the leadership of the chief eunuch, people of African descent secretly conspired and executed the ruler of Bengal (Pankhurst, 2000). From the initial phases of the Islamic invasion until the 16th century, enslaved Africans had been brought to the Indian subcontinent by Arab traders. After that, during the 16th century, Africans were enslaved and brought to India by European powers. It is widely acknowledged that the Portuguese played a role in accommodating the exodus of Africans from Africa to the Indian Subcontinent. Specific Gujarati merchants have also been involved in the complicated structure of African slave ownership (Machado, 2004).

People of African descent possessed outstanding expertise in cavalryman ship. During the period of the Delhi Sultanate, Jalaluddin Yakut was appointed to the highly regarded position of chief of the cavalry in the court of Razia Sultan. An abundance of narratives conclusively demonstrates the exceptional abilities held and honed by people of African descent in mastering horse management, cavalry, and warfare. There was a concentration of African cavalry guards in Hyderabad. The cavalry guards arriving from the African continent, who also held military positions simultaneously, were commonly referred to as the 'Chaush.' There were several African demonstrations in southern India during the year 1857. People of African descent played a significant part in the historic uprising against British colonial rule that occurred in 1857 in India. An African-origin personality named Bastian organized the insurrection with the help of people of African descent and indigenous Indians from Karnataka, often referred to as "Kanarese," in the Supa region of the Uttara Kannada district. During 1859 CE, a persistent campaign of destruction and burning along the border with Goa caused significant turmoil and disruption against colonial rule (Shirodkar, 1998).

 A significant surge in enslaved Africans' arrival occurred in Lucknow around the late 1840s. Still, this was only part of the initial interaction with Africans in the city (Llewellyn-Jones, 2011, p. 62). In 1795, a member of the royal family in Lucknow received nine Abyssinian

enslaved people as a gift (Chatterjee, 1999, p. 192). After fifteen years, African boys, known as Hubshi boys, were recorded as jockeys working for Nawab Saadat Ali Khan. The Nawab, renowned for his vast stables and passion for horsemanship, hired these African jockeys, who received training from a Frenchman (Llewellyn-Jones, 2011, p. 62). In the 1830s, a slave route to Lucknow was established, perhaps in operation for a long time. In April 1833, eighteen enslaved people were brought to Lucknow via this route after being transported from the Yemeni port of Mocha. The trade was carried out by two merchants named Mokhtarji and Mohammad Reza Karbalai, who were referred to as 'Moghul' due to their foreign Muslim background (Llewellyn-Jones, 2011, pp. 62-63).

The present studies on the migration of Africans into India during the given historical period have primarily focused on the conception of slavery, which was deeply rooted in the existing structures of colonialism. Although it is generally accepted that South Asian slavery played a vital role in the migratory patterns of Africans in India, it is crucial to recognize that it was not the only motivating factor related to the migration of Africans to India throughout the colonial era.

There are several examples, such as Diyanat ud Daula and Darab Ali Khan in Awadh, that demonstrate the distinction between the practices of accommodation and assimilation in the transatlantic slave trade and Indian Ocean slavery. Chatterjee (1999) and Hinchy (2015) argued that the practices of slavery in South Asia were not the same as those in the transatlantic slave trade. As a result, Indians treated enslaved Africans as if they were their family members. When compared to the restricted and racially-based confinement that was imposed on plantation-enslaved people in the Americas, the ultimate objective of the Indian Ocean slavery institution was to incorporate enslaved people into homes and society. The Khwajasarais held a significant amount of power. It enslaved Africans in Awadh, in part due to the loyalty they displayed to the Nawab and their close association with him. Young kids, such as Nazir ud-Daula, who was an enslaved African eunuch, were coerced into migrating across the Indian Ocean from East Africa (Hinchy, 2015).

Africans in the royal court of Awadh:

Women of African descent are frequently portrayed as love partners in the court of Wajid 'Ali Shah, which raises questions about the institution of slavery. The recruiting and slavery processes for these women, who functioned as reproductive individuals, lack clarity. The Ishqnamah reveals that many of these women from Africa are identified as siddi and zangi. The use of native nomenclature related to enslavement, such as Ghulam and bandi, goes beyond African women and includes other people in the court of Wajid 'Ali Shah. Most importantly, the type of slavery in this scenario is different, as it does not involve the ownership of enslaved people as property in an industrialized sense (Pietrantonio, 2020, pp. 22-23).

In later phases, after the annexation of Awadh by the British, the King's family members of Awadh set off on a visit to England in August 1856. Queen Janab-I 'Aliyyah of Awadh and her retinue, including enslaved Africans, arrived at the port of Southampton as part of a diplomatic mission. The existence of enslaved Africans in North Indian kingdoms attracted and shocked the populace of Britain (Llewellyn-Jones, 2014, pp. 11–12). During the 19th century, the palaces of Awadh had zananah apartments, or female quarters, which African women guarded. These women had been brought to India by Arab slavers. These women, dressed in uniforms and armoured with muskets, operated as guards for the female spaces within the palaces (Llewellyn-Jones, 2014, p. 15). Wajid Ali Shah designated Musharraf ud-daulah, which was also identified as Haji Sharif, a Mecca pilgrim and former leader of Wajid 'Ali Shah's bodyguard, as an Abyssinian person.

Darab Ali, a young eunuch enslaved in the late 1760s, experienced the expansion of the East India Company's dominance after the East India Company's victory against the Awadhi warriors at Baksar in 1764 CE. A young man named Darab Ali, who was enslaved in South Asia, was believed to be of East African descent by written sources as well as oral traditions. He had probably been shipped across the Indian Ocean, much like a significant number of other eunuchs who were held as enslaved people. At the Bahu Begam family, tight security measures

were in place, including a restricted entrance that around twenty-five African eunuchs guarded. This structure emphasizes the essential function that these people carried out in maintaining order and safeguarding the residence's protection (Bakhsh, 1889).

Until his death, Diyanat ud-Daulah, an African eunuch, faithfully supported the King and served as the collector of customs and excise (Llewellyn-Jones, 2014, pp. 75-76). When Diyanat ud-Daulah died, being an African eunuch, he had no descendants, and as an enslaved person from Africa in Lucknow, he had no relatives. Diyanat ud-Daulah had adopted Fida Hossein, treating him as his child. Diyanat ud-Daulah's origins in India were unpropitious (he may have been among the eighteen enslaved Africans sold to Nasir-ud-Din Haider in 1831). He passed away while living in a situation of wealth and prosperity. He left his house and the property to Wajid 'Ali Shah. He was so wealthy that even the King had borrowed 34,000 rupees (about £3,400) from the eunuch. Afterwards, the eunuch employed two young people, Fida Hossein and Mirza Hossein 'Ali, as armed guards at the Karbala shrine in Lucknow. Diyanat ud-Daulah built this shrine in 1852. The eunuch's remains were transported by train from Howrah Station to Lucknow for burial in his Karbala (Llewellyn-Jones, 2014, p. 189).

Hassan (1832) emphasized the symbolic significance of enslaved people's clothes and ornamentation. Enslaved women often wore broad attire decorated with precious metals, such as armlets, bangles, and chains. The luxurious clothing the enslaved people wore, whether borrowed or required, was an apparent representation of their social status. An equivalent tradition was found among gentlemen who employed enslaved men. These people often decorated their male slaves with opulent garments, such as intricate dresses, valuable shawls, and lavish gold ornaments. The attire of enslaved Africans held significant meaning as it showcased their owners' wealth and social status.

Wajid Ali Shah married almost 375 women, of whom several were of African descent. The *Parikhana*, also called the House of Fairies,

accommodated numerous women of African descent as wives, enslaved people, and guards. Jones argued that Wajid Ali Shah was a sensuous man who enjoyed being surrounded by women,' because he was surrounded mainly by women in and outside the palace. Most of the time, African women were sent to him. His position of authority, wealth, and intense sexuality fueled the King's multiple marriages, regardless of his physical appearance. He married a variety of women, including those of Mughal descent and Abyssinian slaves (Llewellyn-Jones, 2014, pp. 127-128). Haji Khanum, an African woman residing in Faizabad, encountered restrictions on her meetings due to her marital status, as mentioned in *Ishqnamah*. Sometimes, she would upset him by referring to her partner, yet neither considered this an obstacle to their relationship. Then, a brief involvement happened with another married woman. Based on his name, her husband seemed to be one of the African people serving the prince's father, Amjad 'Ali Shah (Llewellyn-Jones, 2014, p. 130).

Shah (2017), in his autobiography, Ishqnamah, narrates an account of Fizzah the Abyssinian and her pregnancy. The term 'Abyssinian' here likely refers to people of African descent, including slaves, who were brought to India by Arab traders. The source emphasizes the diverse roles of Africans, including 'Fizzah' as one of Wajid 'Ali Shah's African wives. This sheds light on their presence and contributions in the historical context of the personal and family affairs of the King. The Ishqnamah also reveals Wajid 'Ali Shah's preference for brides with dark complexions, as seen in his marriage with Yasmin Mahal and Ajaib Khanum, who came from Africa.

The register of Mafi, district Lucknow, page 193, provides information about Begam Hazrat Mahal's descent, precisely her father's status as an enslaved African. She was the daughter of an enslaved African named Amber and his wife, Mehar Afza. Amber belonged to Mir Ghulam Hossein Ahi Khan, who had a link to Faizabad, the former capital of Awadh (Naheed, 2001, p. 66). Around 1840, Hazrat Mahal got entry into the *Parikhana* music academy. The King had given her father a land grant, which gave her this opportunity. Thus, this act of generosity effectively freed her from the bonds of slavery. Hazrat Mahal, Mahak

Pari, received her name upon conceiving a child with the King. In a later period, the King divorced Hazrat Mahal. In 1856, the King set off from Awadh, leaving Hazrat Mahal and her young son behind (Llewellyn-Jones, 2022, pp. 20-21). Although Hazrat Mahal fascinated Wajid 'Ali Shah, as demonstrated in poems, this raises inquiries about the convergence of power, race, and beauty ideals, particularly about the ruler's desire for brides of various backgrounds who had darker complexions (Llewellyn-Jones, 2014, p. 137).

Shah (2017) in Ishqnamah narrates the stories of various Africans, including Mussami Banno Sahib, her father; Galiban Shaidi Sultan, who belongs to the Habas in Africa; Hazi Khanum; Feroz; and Bashir, who serve as eunuchs and have posted as the store's dargah and guard, respectively. Ishqnamah addresses the age and past roles of these eunuchs, including Mohammad Hussain, who was recruited based on Feroz's recommendation. They also recruited Rehan, another Habshi. Hazi Sharif, the darogah (chief) of the Zananah, supervised the parade of two regiments. One regiment consisted of thirty women, while the other consisted of fifty Turkish people.

Hazi Sharif, an eunuch, took charge of both units as the officer-in-charge. Bilal was also an eunuch. The wives and mistresses of King Wajid Ali Shah included Yasmin Pari, Sheerin Habsin, Fizza Habsin, Laila Habsin, Bandi Habshin, and numerous others. Ishqnamah also provides information on Africans' cultural assimilation and adaptation process within royal courts. An annual fair was held, and the common populace of Awadh participated. Wajid Ali Shah promoted the "rahasya" performance, in which he played the character of Kanhaiya while his women played the roles of gopi. In this fair, the African wives also actively engage and play the role of gopi. Yashmin Pari played the character of Gopi, as mentioned in the Ishqnamah (Shah, 2017).

African women were employed as guards in the hostel and school for fairies during the reign of Wajid 'Ali Shah. This employment arrangement demonstrated a coercive orientation. The King's acceptance of lower-class women, including Africans, in his romantic affairs went against societal norms and demonstrated power dynamics

within these relationships (Shah, 2017; Llewellyn-Jones, 2009). People of African descent who remained in Awadh faced financial difficulties, with two of them reporting unpaid wages for eighteen months. The King's dependencies on borrowed money and subsequent pensions demonstrate the economic challenges his varied entourage encountered, including enslaved Africans and other court members (Llewellyn-Jones, 2009).

Shah' Ishqnamah also provides information on the positions of power occupied by people of African descent inside the royal court of Awadh. Those of Muhammad Moatmad Ali Khan, Mohammad Basheer Ali Khan, and Mohammad Rehan Ali Khan are also known as Diyanat-ud-daula mulk, Basheer-ud-daula, and Gulbadun-ud-daula, respectively. Bahar-ul-Mulk Mohammad Rehan Ali Khan as sir subj-Jung, Ehsan-ud-daula, an African person, was appointed based on the suggestion of Diyanat-ud-daulah. Habshi Hajji Mohammad Ali Khan handled the post of Jair-ud-daula, while Habshi Nazad was Mubaruk-ud-daula (Shah, 2017, p. 132).

Basheer and Firoz were two eunuchs his father gave Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. The narrative of Basheer and Firoz is told in the Ishqnamah. While Basheer was appointed guard, Wajid Ali Shah assigned Firoz to watch the Nematkhana (store). According to the identification, Basheer and Firoz were members of the Habshi community who descended from Africa. Basheer was believed to be around 50 years old, while Firoz was roughly 40 years old. Even though Basheer has plenty of experience and knowledge, he demonstrated signs of envy. At the same time, Firoz was defined by his aggressive temper, which was considered to be a lack of understanding. Both of these people were admired for their determination, courage and loyalty. These descriptions offer an understanding of these African people's personalities and responsibilities in the Royal Court of the Nawab (Shah, 2017, pp. 48-49).

Firoz, an African eunuch also known as Firoz-ud-daulah, was responsible for managing the pensions for Begums and other people receiving pensions. Habshi Baseer-ud-Daula was assigned the responsibility of supervising all the crucial palaces of the Nawab.

Gulbadun-ud-doula, also known as Eunuch Rehan, had supervised the village "Khan-e-Khas Sultani." Mubaruk ud-daula (Habshi Nazad) was assigned with the responsibilities of supervising the maintenance of the mausoleums of Najaf Ashraf and Mirza Naseeruddin Haider. Habshi Hajji Mohammad Sharif Ali Khan, known as Musharraf-ud-daula-sharif-ud-daula, was appointed as a colonel and assigned the responsibility of overseeing the cavalry, including Nawab's bodyguards. He additionally headed the Department of Home Affairs (Shah, 2017, pp. 133-134). All these critical positions and people heading these positions were people of African descent in Awadh.

Africans in the uprising of 1857 in Awadh:

The Mutiny, also known as the Uprising or the First War of Independence, happened with great fierceness in Lucknow, the capital of Awadh in northern India. Awadh was autonomous until 1856, after which the East India Company annexed it based on maladministration. Initially, rulers of the territory, the Nawabs, were granted the title of King by the company in 1819. Awadh, known for its richness and cosmopolitanism, rose as one of the wealthiest states following the decline of the Mughal Empire, attracting the interest of the East India Company. Africans played a crucial role during 1857–58 in the Awadh kingdom. Many British, regional, and other sources reveal information about it. There are several anecdotal accounts of African soldiers fighting against the Britishers in Lucknow during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and 1858 that still exist (Llewellyn-Jones, 2011, p. 60).

There was an agreement of 1837 with the company, of which Article 4 stated that army columns could be raised per the requirements of the defence of Awadh, but the expenditure must be restricted to sixteen lakh per annum. Hence, Wajid Ali Shah started strengthening the military, and several African people were also recruited; even a separate African regiment was raised. Ishqnamah also provides references to African recruitment in the military. Diyanat ud-Daula, as an officer, was heading two resales (regiments) named Banka Regiment and Tirchha Regiment. A separate Habshiyan Resala was also there, headed by Ali Naqi Khan. Habshiyan Resala, as cleared by

nomenclature, was the separate army regiment of people of African descent in Awadh. There were several Paltons, of which Palton Gulabi was headed by Haji Husain. Regional sources confirm that several African women were recruited in Palton Gulabi (Taqui, 2001, pp. 14-15).

Wajid Ali Shah engaged in military affairs, including creating new regiments such as "*Palton Akhtari"* and "*Palton Gulabi,*" known for their unique names. The Africans in Awadh, especially the Black Regiment under the command of 'Ali Naqi Khan, held significant positions within the Nawabi army. Wajid Ali Shah also lavished money on soldiers, apart from military affairs. The King purchased 'Arms and Accoutrements' from the company's Cawnpore magazine, specifically for the African Regiments, for £900 (Llewellyn-Jones, 2014, pp. 90-91).

During the reign of Nawab Amjad Ali Shah, the practice of employing Africans in the military and the presence of an enslaved person in the military market through the African slave trade route were established. These practices continued under the rule of Wajid Ali Shah. The establishment of the Habshiyan Resala, a military unit solely consisting of African soldiers, continued this practice. They likely brought about 1,000 African slaves, both male and female, to Lucknow during the years 1847 and 1848. African women were assigned to safeguard the Parikhana and regulate all matters regarding the fairies. Wajid Ali Shah, the ruler, had female African soldiers as personal bodyguards. The British called them "Amazons," they wore short skirts with pleats and loose trousers. They had expertise in horse riding (Llewellyn-Jones, 2009).

Badshah Begum, the wife of Ghaziuddin Haider, left Chhatar Manzil and shifted to Moosa Bagh, a palace in the west corner of the city. She had raised a force of black women who were physically more robust and not less than six feet tall. They were trained and called "black cats." These "black cats" were in the special forces of the King and faught bravely till death in 1857 at Sikandar Bagh and Shahnajaf Morcha (Taqui, 2001, pp. 16-17). These women hailed from the Habash (Kivisild et al., 2004, pp. 752-753) in North Africa. These

women fought with Begum Hazrat Mahal in the uprising of 1857 against the British (Naheed, 2001, pp. 3-4). The contribution of Begum Hazrat Mahal to the uprising and Awadh is well known and significantly studied in history.

Following the British annexation of Awadh in February 1856, Wajid Ali Shah set off on a journey to Calcutta, along with 50 Africans. Meanwhile, approximately 1,200 Africans remained in Lucknow. Before leaving, he assigned African soldiers to safeguard the 'Royal Jewellery and other valuable articles of the Royal Household' until his anticipated return. Amid the uprising, Sir Henry Lawrence, the British Chief Commissioner, shifted the treasures to the Residency. As a result, the African guards relinquished to a more vital opposing force. African people participated in the uprising and rebellion in response to the broken promises of continuing salaries (Llewellyn-Jones, 2009).

During the city's siege and subsequent recapture in March 1858, people of African descent played critical roles in the street-level conflict. Notably, "Bob the Nailer," an African male sniper positioned strategically at an upper window overlooking the Residency, earned recognition for his lethal marksmanship against British troops. Simultaneously, an adept female African sniper, concealed near the Sikanderbagh, showcased exceptional combat skills during the Residency's advance. These 'African negresses' at the Sikanderbagh, equipped with advanced weaponry, demonstrated formidable prowess, challenging prevailing perceptions and revealing their significant impact on the battlefield. The revelation of their gender posthumously by British officers underscored the noteworthy contributions of individuals of African descent during this historical period (Llewellyn-Jones, 2009).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, petitions of Africans to British authorities reflect that Africans once residing in Awadh encountered severe challenges in the years following 1857 (Llewellyn-Jones, 2009). Despite their contributions to the culture and serving in different roles, their population declined, and their living conditions deteriorated. The

petitions for pensions were denied, dragging them into poverty and starvation. Africans in Awadh were disregarded, demonstrating the apathy of the British authorities and locals of Awadh. During the 1870s, only a handful of Africans were left, usually securing jobs in the private and household sectors. The descendants, accepting Shia Muslim beliefs, quietly intermarry with the local population to overcome discrimination. The contemporary African Sheedis, known by their self-designation, reside in Muslim regions, assimilating into society while preserving their distinct yet lost cultural heritage. The African population in Lucknow, though historically significant, has been neglected.

Africans in India, especially in Awadh, also had a backdrop of migration, enslavement, and a shift towards gaining power. Africans in India have risen to power, unlike in the transatlantic slave trade. Some, like Diyanat-ud-Daula and African military commanders, climbed to high-ranking royal court positions, displaying their power, authority, legitimacy and agency beyond the dynamics of migration and slavery. Their rise from enslaved people to influential courtiers powerfully demonstrates the region's social and political dynamics and development, where their skills and loyalty often transcended the idea of discrimination based on race in courtly affairs. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Africans were bodyguards, court officials, and military commanders in Awadh. Africans defended Awadh during the 1857 Uprising, demonstrating their political and military importance.

Scholarly research has concentrated chiefly on aristocratic Africans, not everyday enslaved people and migrants. Their incorporation into Indian culture, primarily through marrying and cultural mixing, is little understood. The case of the African presence in Awadh challenges racial and authority myths, showing a flexible and cosmopolitan social framework. This historiography emphasizes cross-cultural interchange and illuminates a neglected African diaspora narrative in South Asia.

People of African descent in the 19th-century Awadh region had multiple roles in its history. The contributions of Africans were significant and often overlooked, including their incorporation into the royal court, the dynamics of slavery, and their essential part in the

1857–58 uprising. The article unveils the perspectives of Africans that focus on politics, culture, and military matters. It demonstrates the strategic importance of African soldiers, the establishment of different regiments, and the influential role of African women. These accounts reject stereotypes and demonstrate Africans' varied and essential functions in Awadh. Africans in Awadh are essential to the region's socio-political dynamics.

They served in the royal courts as eunuchs, guards, and administrators, significantly impacting court politics and military affairs. Despite being involved in the highest levels of society, Africans also made essential contributions to several societal endeavours. Their involvement in significant historical events, such as the uprising of 1857, demonstrated their courage, loyalty to their masters and agencies associated with them, and their strategic relevance in shaping and addressing local matters. Their acceptance into Indian culture, as seen by intermarriages and cultural assimilation, demonstrates the complexities of their encounters. Overall, Africans in Awadh have shown extraordinary determination, autonomy, and a variety of contributions in numerous domains, demonstrating the importance of a greater understanding of their historical significance that transcends the limitations of slavery. Conclusively, the Africans' presence, arrival, and survival in all social, cultural and political domains in the Awadh region are visible.

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