



AAPRAVASI GHAT TRUST FUND

# ‘They Came to Mauritian Shores’:

The Life-Stories and  
the History of the Indentured Labourers  
in Mauritius (1826-1937)



Satyendra Peerthum  
Historian (AGTF)





**AAPRAVASI GHAT TRUST FUND**

***'They came to Mauritian Shores':***

**The Life-Stories and History  
of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius  
(1826-1937)**



© The copyright rests with the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF) and Satyendra Peerthum (AGTF)

**Publication Coordinators:**

Ms. Corinne Forest (Head of Technical Unit, AGTF)  
& Mr. Satyendra Peerthum (Historian, AGTF)

**Text, Photos, Research, & Conceptualisation:**

Satyendra Peerthum (Historian, AGTF)

**Editor:**

Dr. Nagamah Gopauloo,  
Copy Editor & former Senior Lecturer at the MGI,  
Free Lance Anthropologist

**Design & Layout:**

Khatima Ibrahim,  
Graphic Designer  
T-Printers Ltd,  
Coromandel, Republic of Mauritius

**Publisher:**

Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund,  
1, Quay Street, Port Louis  
Republic of Mauritius

**Printer:**

T-Printers Ltd  
Coromandel, Republic of Mauritius

ISBN-978-99903-88-33-6

# Table of Contents

4	I.	Message by the Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius
6	II.	Message by the Hon. Prithviraj Roopun, Minister of Arts and Culture
7	III.	Message by His Excellency Shri Abhay Thakur, High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Mauritius
8	IV.	Foreword by Mr. Dharam Yash Deo Dhuny, Chairman, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund
9	V.	Acknowledgements and Author's Profile
10	VI.	Abbreviations
11	VIII.	Introduction

<b>Part 1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Part One- The Diversity of the Indentured Labour Population in Mauritius</b>
	15	Chapter One: The Genesis of the Indentured Labour System & the First Indentured Labourer in British Mauritius
	25	Chapter Two: The Diversity of the Indentured Labour Population: Their Origins and Faiths
	45	Chapter Three: The Geographical Diversity of the Indentured Labourers

<b>Part 2</b>	82	<b>Part Two - The Experiences of the Female and Children Immigrants</b>
	84	Chapter One: The Female Immigrant Labourers in Mauritius
	103	Chapter Two: An Overview of the Children Indentured Immigrants

<b>Part 3</b>	116	<b>Part Three - The Free Passengers, Mauritian Contract Workers, and the Other Indentured Immigrants</b>
	119	Chapter One: The Free Passenger Immigrants & The Mauritian Contract Labourers
	135	Chapter Two: The Other Indentured Immigrants: The Chinese, Malagasies, Comorians, and the Liberated Africans

<b>Annexes</b>	163	<b>Annexes</b>
----------------	-----	----------------

# Message by the Honourable Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius



Prime Minister  
Republic of Mauritius

## MESSAGE

*I am pleased to be associated with the landmark publication of 'They Came to Mauritian Shores: The Life-Stories and History of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius (1826-1937)', which is being launched by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, in the context of the national commemorations marking the 183<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the arrival of the indentured workers in Mauritius.*

*This new publication narrates the life-stories and illustrates the portraits of these brave and valiant pioneers who contributed significantly to the transformation of Mauritius from a volcanic island into a garden of sugar. It also highlights the social, economic, and demographic transformations of the island from the 1830s until the early 1900s, by showing the importance of labour, toils, sacrifices, and achievements of more than 462,000 immigrants and their descendants who adopted our island as their new home.*

*The indentured labour system was introduced in Mauritius in the aftermath of the abolition of slavery, as the "Great Experiment" by the British Government. It was established with the specific objective of demonstrating the benefits of "free" labour over slave labour. This labour system led to the genesis of a new world economic order which exists today.*

*The indentured labourers who first set their foot on our territory arrived and climbed up the emblematic 16 steps and passed through the gates of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site. More than two-thirds of them remained and forever altered the island's social, demographic, economic, religious and political landscape.*

.../2

- 2 -

*The Mauritian experience with indenture and the early history of the Aapravasi Ghat are unique because they provide key and well-documented insights into the nature and dynamics of post-emancipation societies which emerged in the colonial plantation world during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After all, the indentured labour system created a distinctive multi-cultural society in Mauritius. Indentured immigration in Mauritius symbolizes the successful interaction and peaceful co-existence of Asian, African and European communities which has led to the emergence of today's Mauritian pluri-ethnic society.*

*I wish to congratulate the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund for this important publication and I am sure that it will give new insights to the Indentured Labour History of Mauritius.*



**Pravind Kumar Jugnauth**  
**Prime Minister**

**13 October 2017**



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

**MINISTRY OF ARTS AND CULTURE**



*"They came to Mauritian Shores: The History of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius 1826-1937"* is a landmark book being launched as a tribute to our forefathers on the occasion of the 183rd anniversary of their arrival in Mauritius.

I congratulate the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, especially Mr. Satyendra Peerthum for this laudable initiative. Through its 180 pages, this publication depicts the life of our ancestors who paved the way towards a modern Mauritius.

183 years ago, when our forefathers reached Mauritian shores, they hardly knew what was awaiting them. They were lured by the promise of a better life but faced very harsh conditions.

Today, we have come a long way as a multicultural, peaceful and prosperous nation. It is, therefore, our duty to continue their efforts by working together for the betterment of our country.

I have no doubt that this publication shall help to enhance our understanding of the Mauritian experience with indentured labour and discover the early history of the Aapravasi Ghat. This historic entry point for those brave men and women brought in to work in the sugar plantations. *"They came to Mauritian Shores: The History of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius 1826-1937"* will also enable us to better appreciate the struggles of our forefathers.

I once again congratulate the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and the author, Mr Satyendra Peerthum. I wish them well for the future.

**P. Roopun**  
Minister



भारतीय उच्चायोग  
पोर्ट लुई, मारीशस



HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA  
PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS

संदेश



मुझे यह जानकर अत्यंत प्रसन्नता हो रही है कि आप्रवासी घाट ट्रस्ट फंड द्वारा मॉरिशस में गिरमिटिया मजदूरों के आगमन के 183 वें वर्ष के उपलक्ष्य में एक स्मारिका प्रकाशित की जा रही है। इस स्मारिका में सन 1826 से 1910 के मध्य मॉरिशस आए लगभग 4,62,000 गिरमिटिया मजदूरों की संघर्ष यात्रा को चित्रों के माध्यम से जीवंत किया गया है। यह सत्य है कि शर्तबंदी के तहत मॉरिशस आए भारतीय मजदूरों की यह यात्रा अत्यंत कष्टप्रद थी लेकिन दमन, अन्याय, कपट और क्रूरताएं झेलने के बावजूद हमारे पुरखों ने जिजीविषा जीवित रखी और अपने पसीने व आंसुओं से एक समृद्ध, आधुनिक और महान मॉरिशस की नींव डाली।

सांस्कृतिक विरासत की सुरक्षा और संरक्षा के माध्यम से व्यक्ति, समाज और देश को स्थायित्व एवं शक्ति मिलती है और मुझे यह देखकर अत्यंत प्रसन्नता होती है कि मॉरिशस के लोगों ने लगभग दो शताब्दी पूर्व भारत से आए अपने पूर्वजों के बहुमूल्य संस्कारों, अद्भुत रीति रिवाजों और समृद्ध परम्पराओं को संजोकर रखा है। इसका सशक्त और जीता जागता उदाहरण आप्रवासी घाट के रूप में हमारे सामने है। विश्व कल्याण हेतु शाश्वत मानव मूल्यों की प्राप्ति हेतु संलग्न मानवीय प्रयास का यह महान स्मारक भारत और मॉरिशस के लोगों के हृदय में एक तीर्थ स्थल के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित है।

यह वर्ष मॉरिशस में शर्तबंदी प्रथा के उन्मूलन का शताब्दी वर्ष भी है साथ ही अगले वर्ष इस देश की स्वतंत्रता का पचासवां वर्ष भी मनाया जाएगा। मैं सभी मॉरिशस वासियों को इस स्मारिका के माध्यम से अपनी शुभकामनाएं प्रेषित करता हूँ और कामना करता हूँ कि यह देश निरंतर समृद्धि, उन्नति और विकास के पथ पर अग्रसरित हो।

अभय ठाकुर  
अभय ठाकुर





## Foreword by Mr. Dharam Yash Deo Dhuny, Chairman, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund



*I am pleased to be associated with the publication of the ground breaking work, **'They Came to Mauritian Shores: The Life-Stories and History of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius (1826-1937)**' by Satyendra Peerthum, Historian, at the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, in the context of the 183<sup>rd</sup> anniversary commemorating the landing of the indentured immigrants in Mauritius. This new publication is in line with the mission statement of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and the objectives of its Act which promote research on the history of indentured labour, the indentured labourers, and their descendants in Mauritius. This work places emphasis on historical research, genealogy, anthropology, oral history, and photography as tools that can be used to enhance our understanding of the Mauritian experience with indentured labour.*

*Indentured migration is a major milestone in the modern history of the Indian Ocean and the wider colonial plantation world during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.*

*Its historical significance is that more than 80% of the ancestors of the Mauritian population arrived as indentured immigrants and passed through the gates of Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site (formerly known as the Immigration Depot and the Coolie Ghat). This particular system contributed in the expansion of the sugar industry and in making Mauritius one of the largest sugar exporters in the world during the mid-19th century. The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site is a tangible symbol of the emergence of this new labour system and the movement of immigrants across the Indian Ocean World in modern world history.*

*Between 1826 and 1946, it is estimated more than four million indentured labourers left India, South East Asia, China, Africa, Java and Melanesia and emigrated to around 40 colonies, countries, and territories located in various parts of the British, French, Dutch, German, Portuguese, and American colonial empires. Furthermore, more than 1.2 million of these labourers came from India, or known as Girmityas, who were sent to work in different parts of the world such as the Caribbean, southern and eastern Africa, the Indian Ocean, South East Asia, and the South Pacific. The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage is significant because it welcomed the largest number of these indentured immigrants. In the process, they and their descendants gradually transformed Mauritius into a modern island society which serves as a shining beacon to the rest of the world to envy and emulate.*

*Eric Hobsbawm, the famous British social historian, once wrote that :*

*“Every nation and citizen of that nation needs to pause from time to time and commemorate the making of their history and pay homage to our forefathers and precedecessors, in the process we are honoring our history and the legacy they have bestowed upon us their descendants.”*

***'They Came to Mauritian Shores: The Life-Stories and History of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius (1826-1937)**' by Satyendra Peerthum precisely explores the experiences, social history, and legacy that our Girmitya ancestors have passed onto us, their descendants, and the crucial role they played in shaping the history and society of our country. It also allows us to pay tribute and honor, each 2<sup>nd</sup> November at the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, the memory of those hundreds of thousands of brave men, women, and children who came to Mauritian shores in search of a better tomorrow for themselves and their children.*

**Dharam Yash Deo Dhuny**  
Chairman, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund  
2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017

## Acknowledgements

*The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and the author wish to put on record their heartfelt gratitude to all those who have made this work possible. We would like to thank Mr. Dharam Yash Deo Dhuny, the Chairman of AGTF, for having proposed the idea of having a publication exclusively on the life-stories, portraits/photos, and history of the indentured labourers in Mauritius during the Age of Indenture.*

*We would like to thank the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Arts and Culture, and T-Printers Company Ltd for their support.*

*We are also extending our deep gratitude to Mrs. Gayan, Director-General of the MGI, Mr. Ramsamy, Head of Library and Archives, Mr. Govinden, Senior Lecturer and Archivist, and Ms. Thancanamootoo, Archivist, and the staff of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Indian Immigration Archives. Mrs. Ramkhelawan, Acting Director, Mr. Mookhul, Archivist, and Mrs. Mohun, Senior Archives Officer, and staff of the Mauritius National Archives, and also the staff of the Civil Status Office, Ms. Seetala in particular, the Registrar General's Department, the National Library, and the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture. We are also grateful to Dr. Indrani Gopauloo, Copy Editor and Free Lance Anthropologist, for her editing of the original draft text. Ms. Chrystelle Gardenne and Mrs. Khatima Ibrahim of T-Printers.*

*A special thanks to the 36 descendants of indentured immigrants who accepted to have the immigrant photos, names, numbers, and bio-data of their ancestors published in this book while respecting the confidentiality of their family histories and genealogies and also in accordance with the MGI Indian Immigration Archives access policy. Their authorization has been acknowledged in the captions next to each immigrant picture and document.*

*Lastly, Mr. Satyendra Peerthum would like to thank and dedicate his book to Mrs. Sharmila Jogessur-Peerthum, his wife, Satyam Kartik Peerthum, his son, Sunidhi Lutchmee Peerthum, his daughter, Dr. Satteeanund Peerthum, his father, and Mrs. Dulary Ramesar-Peerthum, his mother, for all their support. It is also dedicated to Ms. Corinne Forest, Mr. D.Y. D. Dhuny, Dr. Vijaya Teelock, Dr. Richard Allen, Dr. Marina Carter, Dr. Nigel Worden, Dr. Christopher Saunders, Professor Dr. Kofi Agorsah, the Late Professor Robert Shell, Mr. J. Chan Low, Dr. Anwar Janoo, Dr. Sada Reddi, and Dr. Joan B. Connelly.*

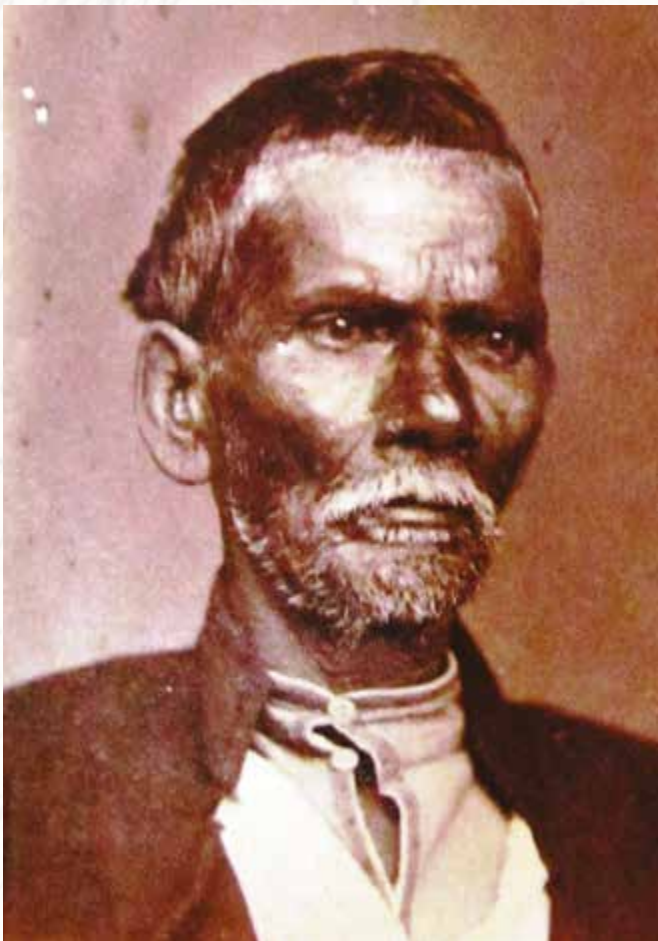
*He would also like to dedicate this publication to my long-time friends, Lovehin Andiapen and Vickram Mugon in particular, and the other members of the AGTF Research Unit and Administration.*

## Author's Profile

**Satyendra Peerthum is a Historian** who is permanently based in the Research Unit of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF) which manages the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site [Landing Place of the Immigrants] in Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius. Over the past sixteen years, he has specialized in the study of indentured labour, slavery, Liberated Africans, maroonage, vagrancy, non-Indian indentured workers, colonial prisons, comparative and quantitative history, sugar estates, wage labour, the Mauritian working class and cultural heritage issues in Mauritius. Mr. Peerthum has also published and co-authored on the above-mentioned themes in several academic articles and books in Mauritius, the United States, South Africa, India and Zanzibar. He has presented academic papers at numerous conferences, he was member of several conference scientific committees and coordinated three international conferences. He has also participated and helped with the production of numerous radio and TV programs and documentaries at the local and international level. He also works as a part-time Lecturer at the University of Mauritius and has worked as Researcher for the Truth and Justice Commission, Researcher Consultant at the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture, the National Heritage Fund, and the Mauritius Museums Council.

# Abbreviations

Apravasi Ghat Trust Fund Collection	AGTFC
Mahatma Gandhi Institute Indian Immigration Archives	MGIIIA
Mauritius National Archives	MNA
Annual Reports of the Protector of Immigrants	ARPI
Notarial Acts	NA
Civil Status Office	CSO
Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture	MCA
National Library	NL
Registrar General's Department	RGD



**Immigrant Lotah arrived in Mauritius from Madras in 1834 at the age of 30. He was from a village on the outskirts of the port city of Madras in southern India. Lotah worked as a labourer on Argy sugar estate in Flacq. He was photographed in 1886 at the age of 82 at the Immigration Depot.**

**In 1889, Lotah was granted a return passage to India. After having worked and lived for more than 55 years on different sugar estates in Flacq district, he returned to his native land.**

*MGIIIA/PG, PE and PF Series & MNA/RA Series*



## Introduction

*'They Came to Mauritian Shores: The Life-Stories and History of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius (1826-1937)' is a landmark book which is being launched by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund with the collaboration of the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Prime Minister's Office in the context of the national commemorations marking the 183rd anniversary of the arrival of the indentured workers in Mauritius. It provides a detailed narrative on the life-stories of more than 110 Indian and other contract workers from the late 1820s to the late 1930s. After all, each immigrant had a name, face, number, and a story to tell which is being told in this book.*

*Our nation is comprised of immigrants who came to Mauritian shores from Europe, Asia and Africa. During the course of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, three different European colonial powers as well as European colonists introduced free and unfree labourers. Between the 1630s and early 1700s, the Dutch brought slaves and free workers from India, Madagascar and South-Eastern Asia.*

*From the 1720s to the early 1800s, the French colonial authorities and colonists imported tens of thousands of slaves and some free labourers from Africa, China, and India. Between the 1830s and early 1900s, the Franco-Mauritian, British, Free Coloured, and Indians planters, merchants, traders, and negociants imported hundreds of thousands of indentured workers from India, Eastern Africa, South East Asia, Madagascar, Aden (Yemen), the Comoro Islands, Burma, Sri Lanka, and China.*

*During the early British period, the indenture labour system existed on a small-scale ever since 1826, but was initiated on a large-scale in 1834 and 1835. It expanded rapidly by 1839 with an introduction of more than 25,000 Indian contract workers. By 1843, it became state-controlled and state-sponsored under the aegis of the local British colonial government. The indentured labourers were usually recruited under three to five-year labour contracts which provided them with a wage, food, clothing, shelter, and health care.*

*Between 1826 and 1910, around 462,801 indentured workers, or 452,070 Indian and 10,731 other contract labourers, were recruited in India and other parts of the Indian Ocean World and brought on an estimated 1500 ships to Mauritian shores. They passed through the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site to toil on the local sugar plantations, other estates, Port Louis, and in the colony's emerging towns and villages. At the same time, Mauritius was the first country to introduce indentured Indian labourers on a large-scale and the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site was the first depot where indentured labourers were registered.*

*More than 63% among them remained and forever altered the island's social, demographic, economic, religious and political landscape. During the mid-19th century, thousands of Malagasy, Comorian, East African, Liberated Africans, Yemeni, Omani, Burmese, Sinhalese, Ethiopian, Siddhi, and Chinese contractual workers were also brought to work on Mauritian sugar estates which also contributed to the emergence of a pluri-ethnic society.*

In 1995, in his classic work *'Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism'*, David Northrup, American social historian, observed:

“Despite the fact that indentured labor contracts usually guaranteed return passages, a great many indentured laborers settled permanently in their new homes after the expiration of their contracts, rather than return to their countries of origin....there is also evidence to suggest that most migrants found in their experience a sufficient measure of satisfaction of the dream that had driven them into indenture. Most migrants made the best of the difficult conditions they encountered, worked hard, lived frugally, and survived to the end of their indentures.”

*This new publication vividly narrates the story of more than 462,000 indentured men, women, and children who reached Mauritian shores between 1826 and 1910. Through its 180 highly visual and informative pages, more than 270 pictures, maps, charts and tables, it highlights the social, economic, and demographic transformations of the island from the 1830s to the early 1900s.*

***'They Came to Mauritian Shores: The Life-Stories and History of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius (1826-1937)'*** is the result of seven years of part-time research at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Indian Immigration Archives, the Mauritius National Archives, the Civil Status Office, the National Library, the Registrar General's Department, the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture, and in 36 Mauritian family collections. It makes an important and original contribution to modern Mauritian national historiography and also to the social history of the indentured workers in Mauritius.

Lastly, I would like take this opportunity to pay a heartfelt tribute to all my ancestors in particular to Peerthum, 5750 bis, the son of Cartick and Dannoo, who came to Mauritian shores as a free passenger from Arrah, Bihar (where he was born in 1846), through Calcutta, during the 1870s. Between the 1870s and 1880s, he worked as a day labourer on Saint Avold Sugar Estate and elsewhere in Savanne District.

Between the late 1880s and early 1900s, Peerthum worked as an engaged laborer on 12-month contracts on Bon Acceuil and then Grande Retaite sugar estates where he died in 1905 at the age of 59. His common-law-wife was Lutchmee Ramdhun (an Indo-Mauritian and daughter of Immigrants Ramdhun and Lolytah) and they had three children including Seesurrun Peerthum, his son and my ancestor. His wife passed away in 1890 and he had to raise 3 children with the help of Immigrant Lolytah and the Mahesh family.

Today, I am a proud descendant of both indentured and free Indian passengers who played an important role in the fashioning of modern Mauritius. It is also important to remember that we are their descendants, we carry their names, their genes, and their blood flows through our veins. Our history is a continuation of their history almost a century and a half after they came to Mauritian shores during the Age of Indenture.

**Satyendra Peerthum,  
Historian, Research Unit,  
Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund,  
Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius  
2nd November 2017**

# Part 1

## The Diversity of the Indentured Labour Population in Mauritius

*“In Memory, Remembrance and as a Tribute to the Trials, Tribulations, Toils, Resistance, Struggles, and Accomplishments of the Indentured Labourers and their Descendants in Mauritius during the Age of Indenture and After....”*

**The Right Hon Sir A. Jugnauth, QC, Minister Mentor, Former Prime Minister and President of the Republic of Mauritius.**

Extract from his official speech for 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2001 when the Arrival of the Indentured Labourers was commemorated at the national level as a public holiday for the first time at the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site

*“By the sweat of their brows, their trials, tribulations, toils and tears, the indentured labourers transformed the British colonies into a garden of sugar [including Mauritius]....They are our ancestors, we carry their names, their blood flows through our veins, they form an integral part of our origins and identities, our history is a continuation of their history...as we are their inheritors”*

**V.S. Naipaul, Indo-Trinidadian Poet and Nobel Laureate of Literature**



**A group of newly arrived Indian indentured labourers in front of their wooden barrack on a Mauritian sugar estate.**

*Photo Collection, MNA*

Names of 36  
 Of Geo. C. Arbuthnot.

Sooroop Sirdar.	X	Lungon.	X
Subaram Mate.	X	Callachand.	X
Bhoodhis.	X	Bholah.	X
Champak.	X	Jisara Bhoodhao.	X
Bhumbhao.	X	Sibehun.	X
Lehooneeram.	X	Chhota Dainilhao.	X
Jullo.	X	Deenram.	X
Chhota Bhoodhao.	X	Budhram.	X
Bachao.	X	Muggroo.	X
Orjoon.	X	Shareah.	X
Ranmohun.	X	Chaylun.	X
Sookram.	X	Choolungo.	X
Dhieram.	X	Bhuggroo.	X
Ghanpau.	X	Gungaram.	X
Bhoowun.	X	Chota Muggroo.	X
Chota Choonulall.	X	Chota Dhieram.	X
Nigna.	X	Doobhun.	X
Auklah.	X	Bhamarah.	X

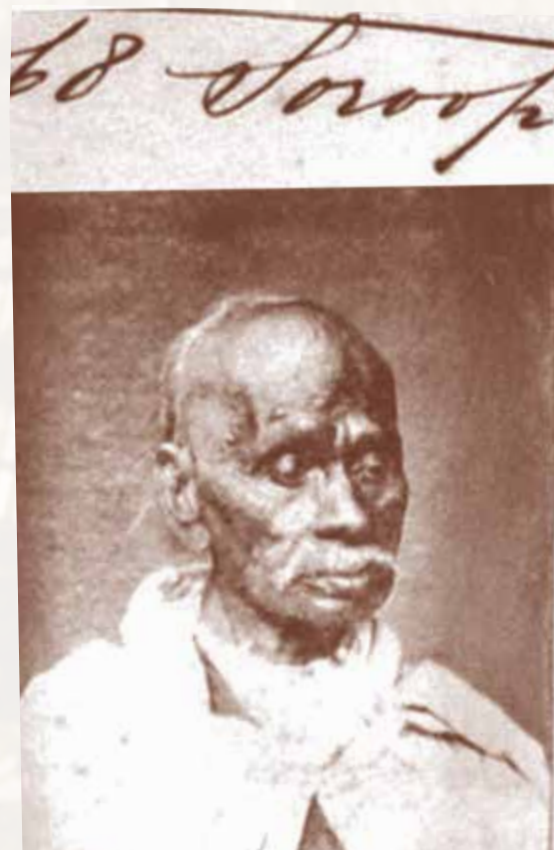
The List of the 36 Hill Coolies from Bihar who arrived in Mauritius from the port of Calcutta, India, on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1834. They were headed by Soorop Sirdar and his mate Subaram. The Coolies were engaged by George C. Arbuthnot, part-owner of the Antoinette Sugar Estate in Rivière du Rempart district.

*MNA/RA Series*

Soorop or Soorop Sirdar was 40 years old when he landed in Mauritius on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1834 with the batch of 36 Hill Coolies. He was from Chota Nagpur in the present state of Jharkand. During the 1830s and 1840s, he worked on the Antoinette Sugar Estate in the district of Rivière du Rempart.

Later, Soorop became a job contractor, a small landowner and planter. He was photographed at the age of 85 at the Immigration Depot in 1879. He passed away in 1884 at the age of 90.

*MGIII/PG and PF Series - MNA/RA Series/NA series*



# Chapter One

## The Genesis of the Indentured Labour System and the First Indentured Labourer in British Mauritius

Between 1826 and 1910, an estimated total number of 462,801 Indian and non-Indian indentured workers<sup>1</sup> reached the shores of Mauritius. From January 1826 to December 1842, the importation of indentured labourers was a private initiative which was controlled and funded by the Franco-Mauritian and British planters as well as merchants and some Free Coloured and Indian planters and traders.

It is estimated that between January 1826 and July 1834, 1,751 indentured labourers<sup>2</sup> worked on individual and group indenture contracts of five years mostly on the sugar estates, and some in Port Louis. It is interesting to note that this represents more than half of the total number of contractual workers who were introduced in Réunion Island from 1826 to 1832.

REPORT of Passengers on the Ship		N <sup>o</sup> 20 <i>Crescent</i>		arrived from <i>Calcutta</i>	
		the <i>23<sup>rd</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup></i>		1826.	
NAMES, Age, Profession or Trade. Where born.	Passports, by what Authority signed and for what destination originally granted.	Motives of the voyage, if designs of temporary or permanent residence in the Colony.	Recommendations with names of Persons willing to become security for good conduct, &c.	Means and means of existence in the Colony independently of trade or profession.	
<i>Mohameth</i>	}	<i>Go on with the Regt to England.</i>	<i>...</i>	<i>...</i>	<i>...</i>
<i>Gaston</i>					
<i>...</i>					

Fig 1a. Ship Register showing the arrival of Immigrant Mohameth in the company of Captain Gaston on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1826.

*MNA/Z2D Series*

1. Estimated from Mahatma Gandhi Institute Indian Immigration Archives (MGIIIA), PE 1 to PE 161, Indentured Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers (1826 -1910), Mauritius National Archives (MNA), Z2D Series Volumes 1 to 188, Free Passengers and other Passenger Ship Arrival Registers (1826-1911).
2. Estimated from MNA, Z2D Volumes 1 to 6, Free Passengers and other Passenger Ship Arrival Registers (1826 -1834), MGIIIA/PE 1, PE 2, & PE 4, Indentured Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers (1826 -1842), PF 1, Register of Indenture Labour Contracts and Agreements (1835-1842).



Archival records at the Mahatma Gandhi Indian Immigration Archives and the Mauritius National Archives show that the first indentured worker under a labour contract from India was Immigrant Mahamod or Mohameth. He arrived on 23rd January 1826 on board the Elizabeth from Calcutta, with his two sons Ali and Hamad. Mahamod was 45 years old and a Bengali Muslim from Birali, a village on the outskirts of the city of Calcutta. He was recruited by Captain Gaston to work as servant for Mr. Oliver, one of the British managers who worked for Gaillardon's Company at Pointe aux Piments Estate in the north west of Mauritius.

Bahadoor	Calcutta	48
7084 Mahamod	Musulman	45

Fig 1b 1. Immigrant Mahamod registered himself as an Old Immigrant at the Immigration Depot or the present day Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site in September 1847 and was provided with the number 7084.

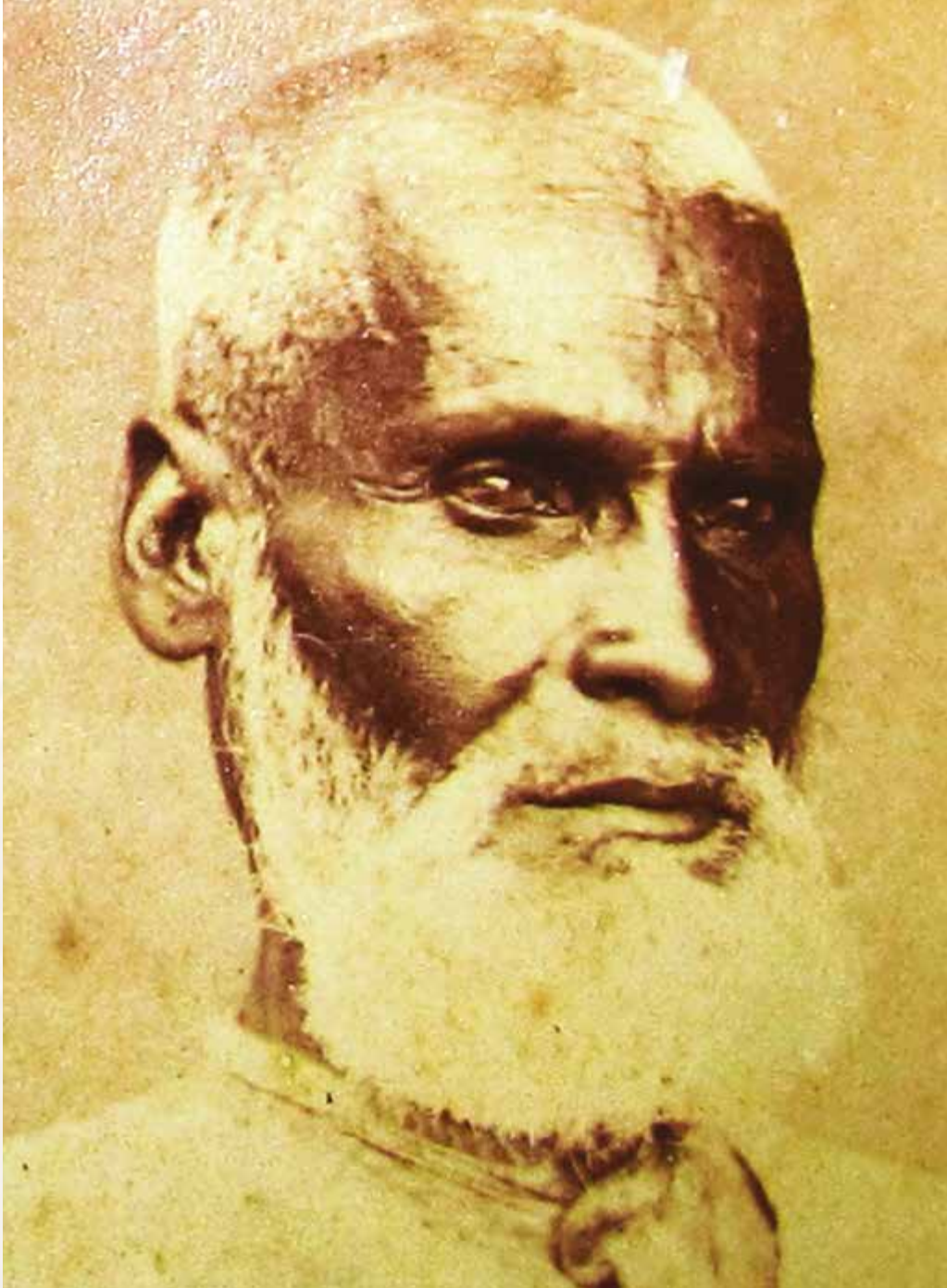
*MGI/PE Series / Immigrant Name and Number reproduced courtesy of A. Zafar Mahamod*

By 1836, Mahamod was working on Vale Sugar Estate as head servant in Captain West's household. In 1839, he purchased three arpents of land near the present day village of Grand Bay and became a small cultivator. A few years later, in 1846, Mahamod bought a second plot of five arpents. He was then 65 years old. Shortly after, he left the employment of Captain West and devoted his full time to the cultivation, and the sale of his garden produce. He also reared livestock. He was then helped by his two sons and hired the service of several Old Immigrants. He became a small proprietor and furnished garden and meat produce to the Vale Sugar Estate and the emerging village of Grand Bay.



Fig 1b 2. Memorandum of a Contract of Service signed by Immigrant Sheikhoussen of Pondicherry, India, with Germain Pragassa, free coloured merchant and estate owner from Mauritius, in the port city of Cuddalore, South India in 1838

*MNA/RA Series*



**Fig 1c. Immigrant Mahamod or Mahometh was photographed at the age of 87 at the Immigration Depot in December 1867 after he was intercepted by the local colonial police because he did not have his immigrant papers on his person.**

*MGIIIA / PG, PE, and PH Series*

In 1856, Mahamod, his two sons, and five grandsons acquired 31 arpents of land, or a small estate close to the Vale Sugar Estate, for 1250 piastres with Captain West acting the sole guarantor for their purchase. Between the mid-1850s and mid-1870s, Mahamod and his family emerged as an important Indian and Indo-Mauritian family of small planters and proprietors in the Pamplemousses District.

After a long and productive life as a former head servant, landowner, and small planter, Mahamod passed away in 1876, at the age of 95 on his small estate near Vale Sugar Estate had lived to see his great grandchildren. Mahamod's obituary was written by Captain West, with whom he had shared a forty-five year friendship, in *Le Mauricien* newspaper. It was an extremely

rare occurrence during the Age of Indenture in Mauritius for a prominent British planter to write an obituary in honour of a former indentured worker.

These pioneers formed part of a constant trickle of Indian indentured workers coming to Mauritius prior to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1834 and the ensuing massive introduction of contractual labourers. Referring to this early period of the history of indentured labour in this small Indian Ocean island, Vijaya Teelock emphasizes: "*Uninterruptedly, the Indian contractual labourers were introduced in Mauritius in small groups at the requests of individual local planters.*"

*Continued* **N<sup>o</sup> 255 continued** *Langlois*  
**REPORT of Passengers on the Ship *Jeune Laure* Captain *Tranquebar* arrived from *Tranquebar* the *8<sup>th</sup> October 1829.***

NAMES, Age, Profession or Trade. Where born.	Passports, by what Authority signed and for what destination originally granted.	Motives of the voyage, if desirous of temporary or permanent residence in the Colony.	Recommendations with names of Persons willing to become security for good conduct, &c.	Professions and names of the Colony independent or profession.
<i>Indian Domestic</i>				
<i>Enock 20.</i>	<i>None.</i>	<i>To serve in the family of M. Bolger.</i>		
<i>Abraham - 18</i>	<i>Articles of Agreement.</i>	<i>Were engaged by all Langlois at Pondichery, for the service of divers individuals in this Colony.</i>		
<i>Adolphe - 20.</i>				
<i>Soupreya - 21.</i>				
<i>Boxou - 28</i>				
<i>Gregory - 25.</i>				
<i>Ramsay 17</i>				
<i>Josephine female 15.</i>				

Fig 1d 1. Enock, Abraham, and several Indian workers arrived in Mauritius from Pondicherry in October 1829 to work for 4 years under the Articles of Agreement for Mr. Langlois, a Franco-Mauritian planter.

MNA / Z2D Series

**SPECIAL CONTRACT.**

The undersigned Emigrants from Calcutta to Mauritius hereby engage to serve *M<sup>r</sup>. Arlanda* in the district of *Flacq* as Laborers on the Estate of *Clemencia* years from the date of this contract in Mauritius, with double the time of any unlicensed absences, in consideration of receiving the wages stated opposite our respective names and allowances following our engagement at the expiry of this contract to enter into new contracts of service one or more with the abovesaid or with other persons to be agreed upon hereafter, until we shall have completed the full period of five years industrial residence in Mauritius, with double the time of any unlicensed absences.

Name.	Father's Name.	Age.	Wages.			Signature or Mark.	Special Agent's Signature.	Married or Single.	REMARKS.
			1st Year.	2nd Year.	3rd Year.				
<i>Radhaund</i>	<i>Bhuroy</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>hu</i>			
<i>Radhaund</i>	<i>Raghobbar</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>x</i>			
<i>Radhaund</i>	<i>Perry</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>x</i>			
<i>Radhaund</i>	<i>Pottly</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>x</i>			
<i>Radhaund</i>	<i>Bhuroy</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>x</i>			
<i>Radhaund</i>	<i>Beehala</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>x</i>			
<i>Radhaund</i>	<i>Luchormun</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>x</i>			
<i>Radhaund</i>	<i>Doya</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>x</i>			

Fig 1d 2. The Special Contract made between Mr. Arlanda, Indian Planter and Negociant, and the 22 Indian Indentured Labourers whom he brought from Calcutta to work at Clemencia Sugar Estate in Flacq in 1833. The terms of this Articles of Agreement are mentioned above.

MNA / RA Series

Between January 1826 and July 1834, these early Indian and some Chinese contractual workers were employed mainly as domestics, babysitters, semi-skilled and skilled workers for a period of between two to four years under the “Articles of Agreement”. They were mainly from Calcutta, Bombay, Pondicherry, Tranquebar, Madras, Singapore, and Penang. It was only in 1829 that some of the planters made a serious attempt to experiment with the first large-scale importation of indentured workers.

As such an estimated number of 802 Indian and 398 Chinese indentured labourers were introduced into Mauritius between June and October 1829, from Indian Ocean port cities such as Madras, Calcutta and Singapore. Gaillardon, Thompson & Company played a key role in this enterprise. In October 1829 John Finiss, the Chief Commissary of Police, mentioned to Colonel Barry, Chief Secretary to Government in Port Louis, that: “I think it my duty to state these circumstances at the outset that if the experiment succeeds, further importations will no doubt take place”.

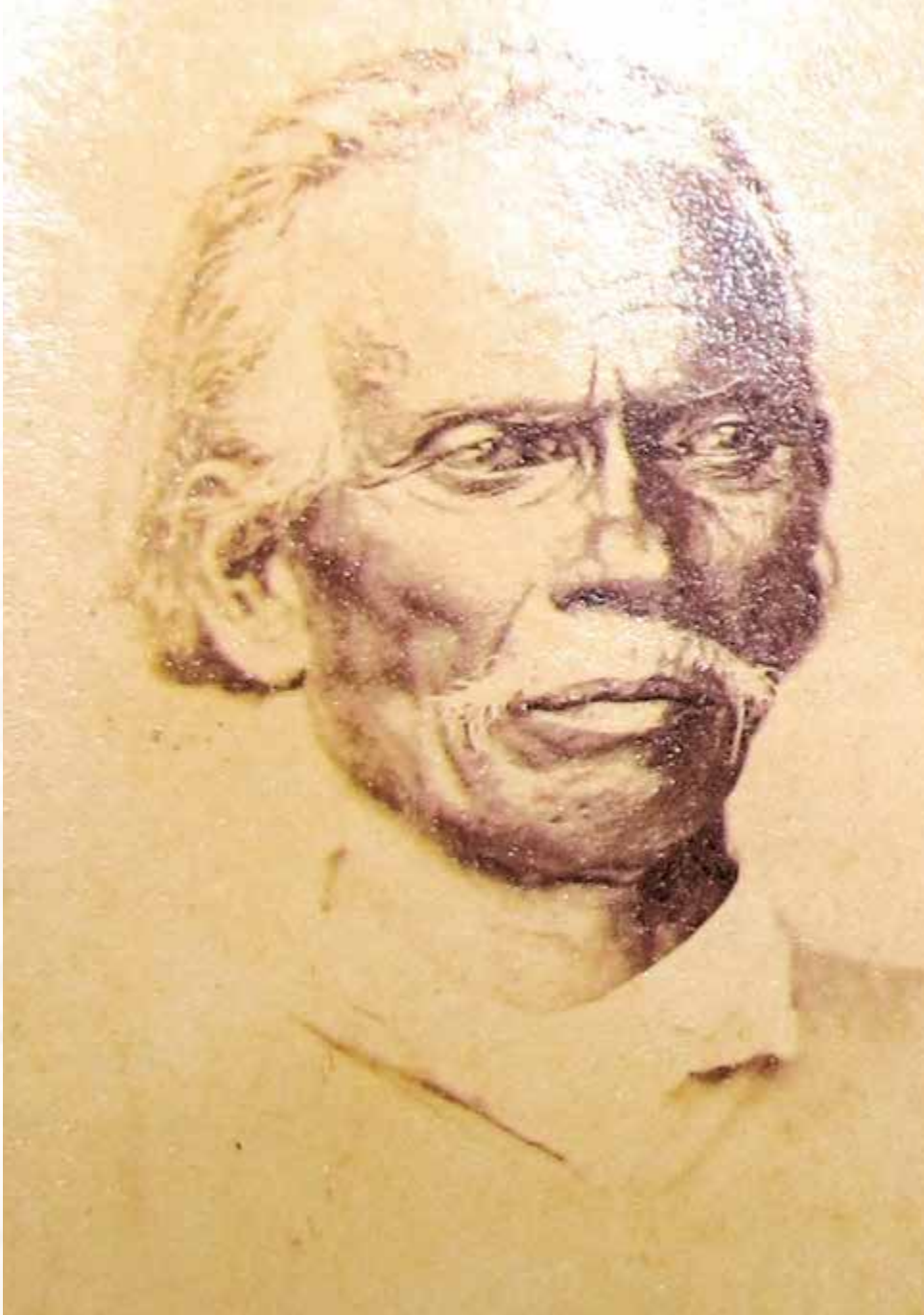
NAMES, Age, Profession or Trade, Where born.	Passports, by what Authority signed and for what destination originally granted.	Motives of the voyage, if desirous of temporary or permanent residence in the Colony.	Recommendations with names of Persons willing to become security for good conduct, &c.	Permits and means of existence in the Colony independently of trade or profession.	REMARKS
Two Hundred and Forty nine Chinese Mechanics and Labourers.			Sup <sup>r</sup> Gaillardon & Co & Sup <sup>r</sup> Thompson & Co		vide before dated 28 July three arr Cassida See

**Fig 1e. In July 1829, 249 of the 398 Chinese indentured mechanics and labourers were brought from Singapore by Mr. Gaillardon, Thompson & Company to work on Mauritian Sugar Estates**

*MNA/Z2D Series*

As early as 1829, local colonial officials such as the colony’s main law enforcement officer, were already referring to the importation of hundreds of indentured labourers to work on the island’s sugar estates, as “an experiment” which was being carried out by the Mauritian planters. However, within a few weeks, this labour experiment proved to be a dismal failure, as some of the Franco-Mauritian sugar estate owners and their subordinates mistreated the indentured workers.

In addition, they either paid their wages late or did not pay them at all and failed to fulfill the other contractual obligations to their workers. As a result, the Indian and Chinese indentured workers refused to work and deserted the sugar estates. They were arrested as vagrants and they eventually resorted to petty crimes. This proved to be a source of major concern for British colonial authorities and the police force. By the end of 1829 and early 1830s, the authorities gradually repatriated the majority of the indentured workers to Madras, Calcutta and Singapore.



**Fig 1f. Immigrant Peerkhan was photographed at the Immigration Depot in 1868 at the age of 90.**

*MGIIIA / PG and PE Series*

In the late 1820s and first half of the 1830s, quite a number of indentured workers were recruited on individual contracts, as the experiences of Peerkhan and Bactuon depict. In 1828, Peerkhan, a widower, arrived in Mauritius from Calcutta with his three sons who were in their twenties. He was 50 years old and engaged to work as a black smith for five years for Mr. Sampson on Belle Mare Sugar Estate in Flacq. Peerkhan was a Bengali Muslim born in 1778 in the town of Purohli. He left Mr. Sampson's employment in the late 1840s when he became a small landowner. He earned his living as gardener and later as a sugar cane cultivator. He passed away in the village of Poste de Flacq in 1872 at the advanced age of 94.

Peerkhan	Calcutta	50	•	son of J. J. J. J.	Sampson	1120
Buguth	•	45		Shill & son of J. J. J.	Mollie	1120
Auklah	•	55		son of J. J. J.	Prodelet	1120
Bactuon	Calcutta	45		son of J. J. J.	Sublet	1120

**Fig 1g. Extract from archival register showing arrival of immigrants Peerkhan and Bactuon in 1828 and 1829 respectively.**

*MGIIIA / PE Series*

The indentured labour system became state-controlled and state-sponsored in January 1843 and lasted until August 1910. The post of Protector of Immigrants was created and an Immigration Department, which is located at today's Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, was established on the shores of Trou Fanfaron Bay in Port Louis harbour to closely monitor the entire system in Mauritius.

# VITAL STATISTICS.

E. 18

## Arrivals and Departures of Indian Immigrants 1834 to 1918.—Continued.

Year.	Arrivals.		Departures.		Year.	Arrivals.		Departures.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.		Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1841 ...	499	43	995	94	1881 ...	...	...	1,180	371
42 ...	73	10	2,021	94	82 ...	805	436	1,466	397
43 ...	30,218	4,307	2,884	108	83 ...	1,283	632	1,766	640
44 ...	9,709	1,840	2,312	149	84 ...	4,450	1,939	1,362	491
45 ...	8,918	2,053	2,492	170	85 ...	246	112	2,891	1,110
46 ...	5,718	1,621	2,556	204	86 ...	511	235	1,649	671
47 ...	5,174	656	1,651	133	87 ...	191	73	1,707	642
48 ...	4,739	656	2,639	376	88 ...	482	231	1,283	448
49 ...	6,378	1,047	4,298	594	89 ...	3,244	1,298	990	332
50 ...	8,436	1,594	3,283	442	90 ...	2,152	873	827	238
51 ...	8,257	1,763	2,895	374	91 ...	713	278	716	184
52 ...	13,671	3,814	2,034	392	92 ...	...	...	1,129	342
53 ...	9,877	2,267	1,767	261	93 ...	353	132	1,197	457
54 ...	14,995	3,489	3,166	509	94 ...	758	268	754	214
55 ...	9,645	3,270	3,702	565	95 ...	1,249	485	890	275
56 ...	9,130	3,523	4,220	677	96 ...	593	208	858	307
57 ...	8,640	4,085	3,794	809	97 ...	314	112	671	248
58 ...	20,932	9,014	6,707	1,458	98 ...	...	...	842	264
59 ...	31,643	12,754	4,146	971	99 ...	...	...	564	182
60 ...	9,070	4,216	2,290	543	1900 ...	2,094	796	858	293
61 ...	10,232	3,753	1,786	471	01 ...	3,265	1,309	469	162
62 ...	7,440	2,453	1,752	460	02 ...	1,875	690	462	198
63 ...	3,667	1,587	2,553	667	03 ...	374	134	383	140
64 ...	5,626	1,926	2,692	721	04 ...	1,513	544	413	148
65 ...	14,910	5,373	2,854	667	05 ...	534	186	314	105
66 ...	3,702	1,894	2,925	890	06 ...	463	155	435	180
67 ...	317	33	2,571	827	07 ...	439	147	366	145
68 ...	1,968	640	1,880	664	08 ...	...	...	775	302
69 ...	1,182	590	1,684	636	09 ...	...	...	512	174
70 ...	2,831	1,245	2,172	670	10 ...	397	135	403	182
71 ...	2,318	974	2,369	705	11 ...	...	...	364	127
72 ...	4,015	1,759	2,788	1,031	12 ...	...	...	338	119
73 ...	5,226	2,388	2,160	875	13 ...	...	...	264	99
74 ...	4,818	2,234	2,874	1,201	14 ...	...	...	277	104
75 ...	1,996	923	2,368	1,055	15 ...	...	...	240	112
76 ...	330	172	2,354	917	16 ...	...	...	343	162
77 ...	1,528	659	1,794	623	17 ...	...	...	1	1
78 ...	8,203	1,623	1,835	527	18 ...	...	...	...	...
79 ...	2,013	1,066	1,926	629	19 ...	...	...	...	...
80 ...	371	371	1,731	614	...	...	...	...	...

See last page of Section.

From 1884 to 1920 the total number of immigrants recruited in Madras amounted to 13,704 males and 5,689 females, and in Calcutta 12,445 males and 4,651 females.

Fig 1h. Arrivals and Departures of Indian Immigrants between 1841 and 1910.

I think it my duty to state these circumstances at the outset, as if the experiment succeeds, further importations will no doubt take place, and a number of domestic Slaves will be turned to culture, also adding to the duties of the Police, the

Fig 2. Letter of John Finiss, Chief Commissary of Police, to Governor Sir Charles Colville Secretary to Colonel Barry, Chief Secretary to Government. The letter dated 21 October 1829, refers to “the experiment” in clear terms.

MNA/RA Series

List of Inhabitants who petition to be allowed to retain in their Service divers Indians recently arrived & offering to fulfil on their behalf the formalities required by Government as per Petitions 1 to 7. herewith

- N<sup>o</sup> 1. M<sup>r</sup> A. Langlois. for Jacquith & family
- 2 M<sup>r</sup> Heynemans. for Abraham & Ransam
- 3 - Lachiche for Adolphe
4. M. Arlanda (shunk) for Bapou
5. - S. Desmarais (arru) for Enoch
6. E. Bolgerd — for Chavron town
7. Borelle — for Ransam (no. 2)

J.F.

Fig 3. A List of Mauritian inhabitants, including Mr. Arlanda and Mr. Langlois, who petitioned Governor Sir Charles Colville for permission to employ the Indian contract workers who arrived on the *Jeune Laure* from Pondicherry and Tranquebar in October 1829.

MNA/RA Series

26 October 1829  
Commissary of Police

Transmitting for  
submission to His Excellency  
petitions from various  
individuals, praying  
permission of residence  
in behalf of several  
Indians, recently arrived  
here from Pondicherry,  
to be employed as domestic  
servants - requesting in-  
structions, with respect to  
the security to be taken  
and stating the <sup>interior</sup> arrange-  
ments which he considers  
desirable, to enable the  
Police, at all times, to  
trace out, the Chinese  
& Indians, who have or  
may obtain a settlement  
in the Island -

Wm. Finiss  
Commissary of Police

Fig 4. A note from John Finiss, Chief Commissary of Police, to Governor Colville concerning the importations of Indian and Chinese contract labourers between July and October 1829.



Excellenc,  
 Sinnesamy, Indien, a l'honneur de vous  
 Capour ten humblement qu'il est arrive' en cette  
 Colonie dans le courant de l'année Derrière & y a  
 resté par de quinze mois, qu'il est retourné dans  
 l'Inde sur le Brick Catechimy & il vient d'arriver  
 sur le N. la jeune L'auve cap. Lauglois, au service  
 de Singdabalampouli, que j'aurais résider en cette  
 Ile pendant deux ans, il supplie qu'il vous plaise  
 excellenc l'accorder la Permission de résider sous  
 le cautionnement soit de dit Singdabalampouli  
 soit de François Joseph Montu qui le soumettra  
 à tous les règlements de ce relatif.  
 Port Louis le 12 Octobre 1829.  
 F 607 607 7 17 17

Fig 5. A letter from Immigrant Sinnesamy of Pondicherry who arrived in  
 Mauritius originally in 1826, and returned as an indentured servant in October 1829.

MNA/RA Series

The Mahatma Gandhi Institute Immigration Archives and the Mauritius National Archives indicate that around 97.7% of the indentured immigrants or 452,070 men, women and children who were landed in Mauritius came from the Indian subcontinent between the late 1820s and early 1900s. On the other hand, around 2.3% or 10,731 men, women and children came from China, South-East Asia, Madagascar, the Comoros, Mozambique, and other parts of the Indian Ocean World such as Ethiopia, Yemen, Ceylon, and Réunion Island <sup>3</sup>.

3. Estimated from MGIIIA, PE 1 to PE 161, Indentured Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers for (1826-1910); MNA, Z2D Series Volumes 1 to 188, Free Passenger and other Passengers Ship Arrival Registers for (1826-1911).

## Chapter Two

# The Diversity of the Indentured Labour Population: Their Origins and Faiths

During the late 1830s and early 1840s, the overwhelming majority of the Indian contractual labourers hailed from the Bengal and Madras Presidencies, and transited through the ports of Calcutta and Madras, while only a handful arrived from the Bombay Presidency through the port of Bombay. Thousands of these Indian workers were also drawn from places as diverse as Pondicherry, Cochin, Cuddalore, Karikal, and Tranquebar and were registered as coming from the Madras Presidency.



Fig 6. The Main Regions and Districts of recruitment for Indian indentured labourers (1826 – 1910).

## 1<sup>ST</sup> IMMIGRATION.

ARRIVALS of Indian Immigrants from 1834 to 1st December 1842, according to the Security Bonds given at the General Police by Employers for the despatch of the Engaged Immigrants at the expiration of their Five Years Engagement, which were transferred to the Immigration Office in 1843.

YEARS.	CALCUTTA.				MADRAS.				BOMBAY.				TOTAL.				REMARKS.
	M	W	B	G	M	W	B	G	M	W	B	G	M	W	B	G	
1834	56	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	29	—	—	—	75	—	—	—	
1835	1,101	59	22	11	59	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,160	61	22	11	
1836	2,978	131	18	10	641	43	2	—	—	—	—	—	3,619	174	20	10	
1837	4,207	177	59	29	2,546	136	7	3	60	8	—	—	6,873	321	66	32	
1838	6,267	151	29	10	5,117	70	15	10	139	—	—	—	11,523	221	44	20	
1839	255	4	—	—	678	98	2	—	—	—	—	—	931	102	2	—	
1840	15	1	—	—	79	—	—	—	10	—	—	—	107	9	—	—	
1841	75	7	5	2	359	26	16	8	16	—	—	—	480	33	19	10	
1842	54	4	2	1	15	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	69	8	4	2	
	15,049	634	133	63	9,524	367	44	22	264	8	—	—	24,837	929	177	55	

T. HUGON,  
Protector of Immigrants.

**Table 1: Statistical return showing the arrival of indentured immigrants (1834 – 1842).**

*MNA/ BIB/ Annual Reports of the Protector of Immigrants (ARPI)*

One of the major consequences of the importation of indentured labourers between 1826 and 1910, was the emergence of a diverse indentured labour population. It was a dynamic and productive workforce comprising Hindus, Tribals, Muslims and Christians who were employed mostly on the sugar estates and in Port Louis. It contributed massively to the demographic revolution which Mauritius experienced between the mid-1830s and early 1860s as the Indian indentured workers became the majority population.

The emigrants originated from all the major present-day states of India such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujerat, Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra and Telangana, Orissa and Kerala, thus replicating the great diversity of social and cultural mores, traditions, faiths, and practices in Mauritius.

**Table 2: Geographic Diversity of the Indentured Labour Population:  
Present-Day Indian States and Districts of Recruitment (1826 – 1910) <sup>4</sup>**

PRESENT-DAY INDIAN STATES	DISTRICTS
Bihar	Champaran, Siwan, Gopalganj, Saran, Patna, Supaul, Araria, Buxar, Gaya, Bhagalpur, Purnia, Kishanganj, Jahanabad, Aurangabad, Munger, Dharbanga, Muzaffarpur, Bhojpur, Katihar.
Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow, Azamgarh, Basti, Alligarh, Ghaziabad, Ballia, Ghazipur, Sasaram, Sultanpur, Sarnath, Firozabad, Gorakhpur, Mirzapur, Sitapur, Moradabad, Agra, Fatehpur, Kanpur, Chitrakut, Aligarh, Buxar, Etawah, Ghaziabad, Muzaffarnagar, Bareilly, Gonda, Varanasi, Faizabad, Jaunpur, Pratapgarh, Allahabad, Hardoi Mathura, Mau, Meerut .
West Bengal	Purolia, Bancoorah, Midnapore, 24 parganahs, Calcutta, Bhirbhum, Dhubri, and Raniguni.
Madhya Pradesh	Gwalior, Bundelkhand, Ujjain, Jabalpur, Sheopur, Rewa, Rajgarh, Indore, Gouraha.
Rajasthan	Bikaner, Ajmer, Hanumangarh, Chittor, Udaipur, Sirohi.
Haryana	Noida.
Jharkhand	Ranchi, Ramgarh, Purulia, Deoghar, Sahibganj, Chota Nagpur, Hazaribagh, Gumla, Palamu, Dumka, West and East Singhbhum, Jamshedpur.
Gujarat	Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat, Palanpur, Porbander.
Maharashtra	Solapur, Thane, Wardha, Raigarh, Aurangabad, Konkan, Nashik, Pune, Kohlapur, Ratnagiri, Satara, Malwand.
Tamil Nadu	Madras, Tiruchchirappalli, Nagappattnam, Pondicherry, Melur, Tirunelveli, Coimbatore, Salem, Cuddalore, Thanjavur, Madurai, Vellore, Krishnagiri, Karaikal.
Andhra & Telangana	Vishakapatnam, Vijayanagar, Nizamabad, Secunderabad, Chittoor, Guntur, Godavari, Kurnool, Hyderabad, Nellore, Cuddapah, Rajahmundri Anantapur, Nizamabad.
Karnataka	Bijapur, Belgaum, Bangalore, Mysore, Gulbarga.
Chattisgarh	Bilaspur, Raigarh, Raipur.
Kerala	Mallapuram.
Orissa	Balasure, Sonapur, Puri, Cuttack, Deogarh.
Punjab	Ludhiana, Firozpur, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala.

COUNTRIES	DISTRICTS
Nepal	Surkhet, Bara.
Pakistan	Peshawar, Lahore, Khas, Sialkot.
Bangladesh	Saidpur, Chittagong, Dinajpur, Jessore, Rajshahi, Sherpur, Sylhet, Sundarbans.

4. MGIIIA, PE 1 to PE 161, Indentured Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers (1826 - 1910); MNA, Z2D Series Volumes 1 to 188, Free Passengers and other Passengers Ship Arrival Registers (1826 - 1911).

**Table 3: Regions of Origin of the Indian Indentured Labourers who came to Mauritius (1826 – 1910) <sup>5</sup>**

<b>Regions of Origin</b>	<b>Number of Labourers</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Bihar/Jharkhand	181,064	40%
Tamil Nadu and Kerala	113,017	25%
Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and other parts of northern India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal	81,138	18%
Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab and Gujerat	45,207	10%
Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Orissa and neighbouring regions	31,644	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>452,070</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4: The Faiths of the Indentured Labour Population who arrived in Mauritius (1826 - 1910) and their categorisation in the Ship Arrival Registers <sup>6</sup>**

<b>Categorization of the Indentured Labourers</b>	<b>Number of Labourers</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Hindus	316,451	70%
Tribals	63,289	14%
Muslims	67,810	15%
Christians	4,520	1%
Andra, Telangana, Karnataka, Orissa and neighbouring regions	31,644	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>452,070</b>	<b>100%</b>

5. & 6 Estimated from MGIIIA, PE 1 to PE 161, Indentured Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers (1826 -1910); MNA, Z2D Series Volumes 1 to 188, Free Passengers and other Passengers Ship Arrival Registers (1826 - 1911).

Pamasany	✓	"	36
Moonen	✓	"	38
Joseph Isaac	✓	"	28
Amouidon	✓	"	38
Sutchmanen	✓	"	30
Mootien	✓	"	30
Chaquevin	✓	"	30
Pamsany	X	"	28
<del>Yess. P.trato 25/4/84.</del>			<del>29</del>
Pyniandee	✓	"	40
Wagun	✓	"	26
Bishmant	✓	"	30
Domy	✓	"	29

Fig 7. An Immigrant Ship Register which shows the arrival of 13 Indian indentured labourers in Port Louis between 1835 and 1839.

MGIIIA/PE Series

Name	Father's Name	Resent Age	Place of Birth	Date of Arrival in Colony	Name of Ship by which introduced
Digana	Sunoo	49	Madras	October 1859	Shantled Larrow
Daidof	Ragoo	50	Calcutta	December 1843	Naikin
Sowamburry	Sowamburkul	38	Satia	August 1848	Catherine Apcar
Dulloo	Mohunghoo	50	Lucknow	February 1855	Adelaide
Sukun	Durah	51	Ayryghur	August 1844	Apolline
Khonkhon	Oree	30	Foruckpore	April 1874	Lady Melville
Ojootha	Likho	48	Gaugypore	August 1855	Kurus
Bungoy	Lichunin	39	Guja	August 1852	Ratcliff
Chatterdharu	Phoobul	23	Gaugypore	January 1874	Gleuoy

Fig 8. A list of ex-indentured workers from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, who arrived between 1843 and 1874, were provided with a Free Return Passage from Mauritius to Calcutta in 1879, which further highlights the regional diversity of the Indian Labourers.

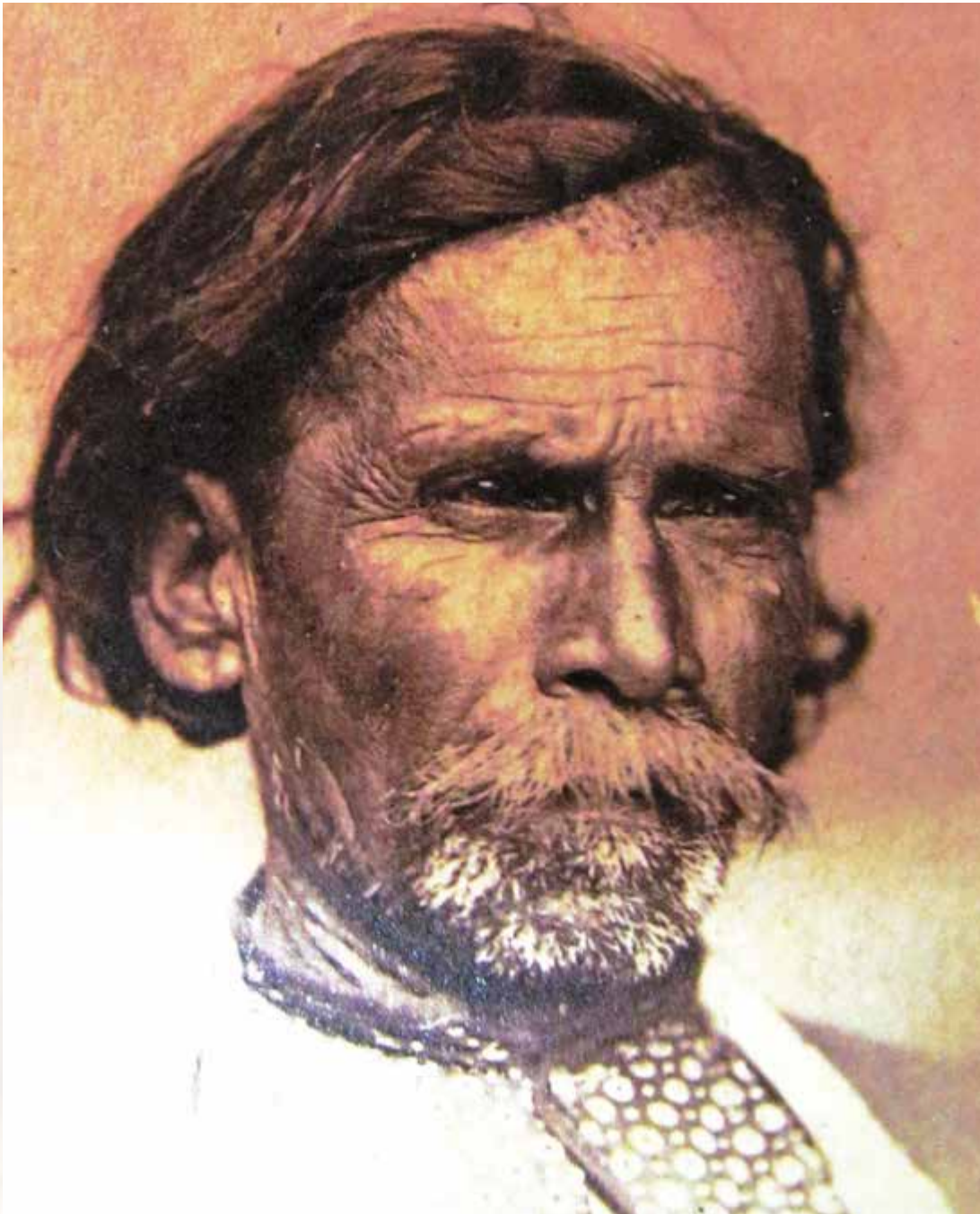
MNA/PB Series

Name of Passenger	Father's name	Age	Sex	Village	Perquannah.	Zillah.
Lutchma	Rammy	47	Male	Hydrabad	Kagapoor	Sheepoor
S <sup>r</sup> Ahmed	Abdoolcader	61	-	Boolderga	Ekolapone	Dicean
Korind	Mahadoo	40	-	Tanna	Tanna	Tanna
Ramah	Khagjee	55	-	-	Konkoo	Konkoo
Lusimon	Dhondie	38	-	Puttagery	Puttagery	Puttagery
Emack	Rugnaut	60	-	Coover	Secundrabad	Tallianah
Rubba	Lohan	42	-	Mozambiga	Mozambiga	Mozambiga
Mahapia	Sudon	50	-	Fulton	Fulton	Suttara
Lusimon	Korind	38	-	Malwar	Malwar	Lawnary
Ahan Khan	Ahmed Khan	26	-	Rajapore	Rajapore	Puttagery
Sorbial	Karainamy	46	-	Kellora	Kellora	Kellora
Tatoo	Emmanting	39	-	Surut	Surut	Surat
Fojia	Jungo	62	-	Cottanchurn	Hydrabad	Coalala
Osmunna	S. Shinnon	41	-	Hydrabad	"	Hydrabad
Louis	Passal	50	-	Carill	Bombay	Bombay
Purroo	Sudlooc	29	-	Narsingpore	Cowrud	Suttara
Masoo	Kagapa	55	-	Kagapally	Hydrabad	Kolentapur
Purroo	Purrojee	55	-	Hydrabad	"	Hydrabad
Ramona	Boomana	26	Female	-	-	"
Lusimon	Amah	7	Male	B. C.	B. C.	B. C.

Fig 9. A list of ex-indentured workers from present-day Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Telangana, and Karnataka, who arrived during the 1850s and 1860s were provided, with a Free Return Passage from Mauritius to Madras and Bombay in 1874 which underscores the regional diversity of these Indian labourers.

MNA/PB Series

## Indentured Workers Adhering to the Hindu Faith



**Fig 10. Immigrant Luchmun was a Hindu indentured labourer.**

**He arrived in Mauritius from the port of Calcutta in 1830 at the age of 35.**

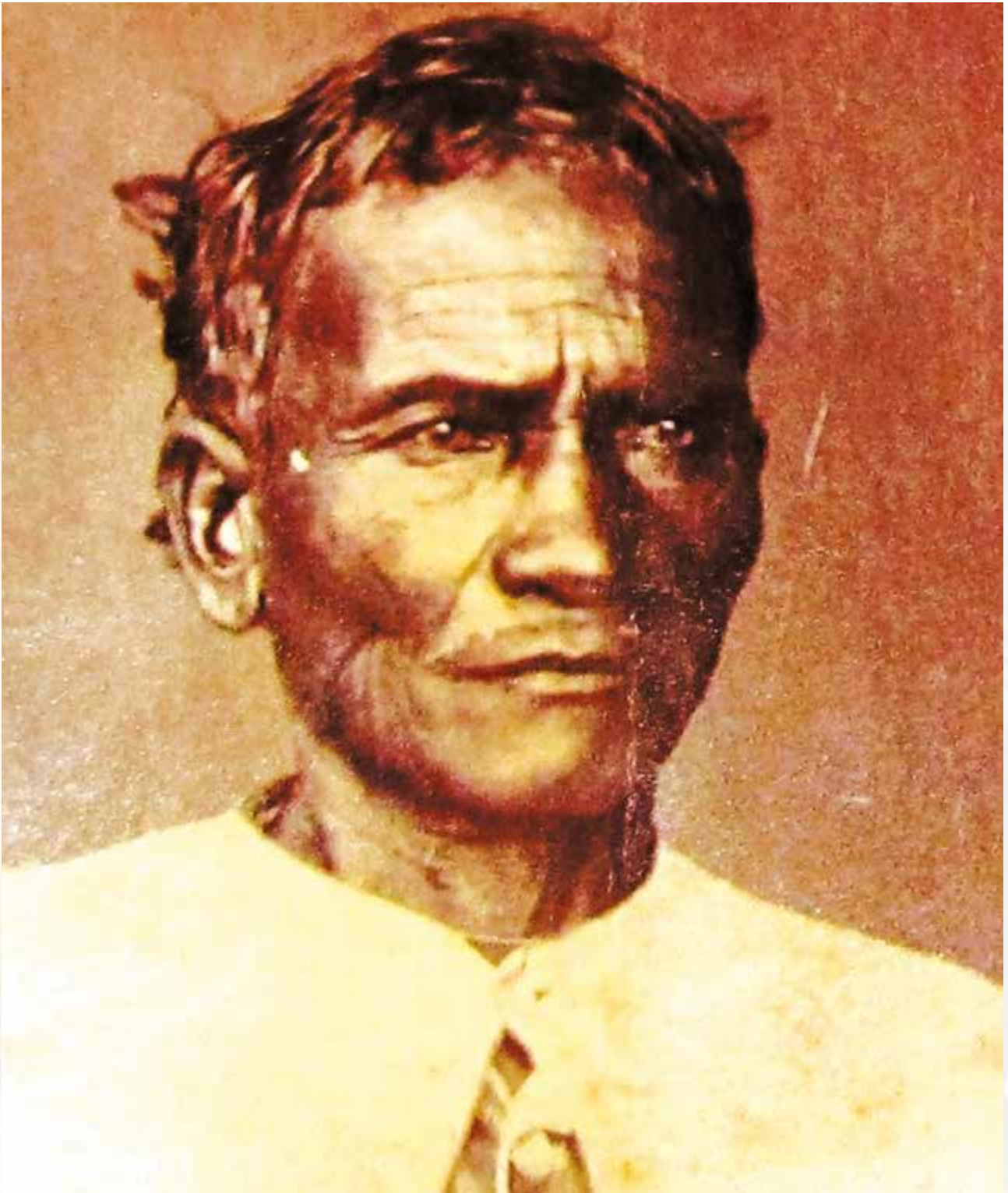
**He was photographed when he was 86 years old at the Immigration Depot in 1881.**

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series*

Hinduism was the dominant faith among the Indian indentured labourers throughout the entire indenture era. Between 1826 and 1842, approximately 57% of the total number of Indian indentured workers proceeding to Mauritius were classified as being Hindus. Between 1826 and 1910, Hindus consisted around 316,451 or 70% of the total number of indentured workers arriving from India.

Among the earliest Hindu Indian indentured labourers who landed on Mauritian shores was Immigrant. Bactuon arrived in Port Louis from Calcutta in 1829. He was born in a village in Bihar in 1784 and was 45 years old when he engaged to work for five years for Mr Tribolet on a sugar state in the district of Flacq. Bactuon lived and worked his entire life in Mauritius in the same district where he died on 15 March 1860 at the age of 66.





**Fig 11. Immigrant Cenevache was a Hindu indentured labourer from Bengal. He arrived in Mauritius from the port of Calcutta in 1837 at the age of 25. He was photographed at the age of 72 at the Immigration Depot in 1884.**

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series*

*Emerald Isle* from Calcutta

**Nominal List** OF IMMIGRANTS, CONSISTING OF 213  
*(assigned to Barb. 4/8/74)*

Name of the Immigrant.	Age.	Former Employment.	Name of the Father or Mother of Immigrant.
Shit Karim	20	Labourer	Cootballu
Karrimbar	20	"	Korrally
Maddhoc	24	"	Kungli
Bharosee	20	"	Sorbub
Ramdiat	20/1/74	"	Sallehu
Mirjau	30	"	Mirjau
Raga	30	Barber	Mirjau
Hossain Khan	32	Labourer 4/8/74	Hossain Khan
Burkuth	30	"	Koodal Khan
Korrally	24	"	Mootu
Shit Maddhally	22	"	Shit Maddhally
Shit Karabally	18	"	Muddhally
Mannia	28	"	Mannia
Sorbun	26	"	Sorbun
Mujjaree	26	"	Mujjaree
Mirjau	30	"	Mirjau

Fig 12. Over 200 Indian indentured labourers travelled on the *Emerald Isle* from Calcutta in January 1843 were mostly Hindus with some Muslims and Tribals. The *Emerald Isle* was the first indenture ship to anchor at Mauritius after the indentured labour system was placed under the control of the British colonial government which partially funded the undertaking.

MGIIIA/PE and PF Series

# VISUALIZING THE PAST I

## Immigrants Nundoo, Auchoybur, and Dookawah:

Grandfather, father, & son Indentured Labourers

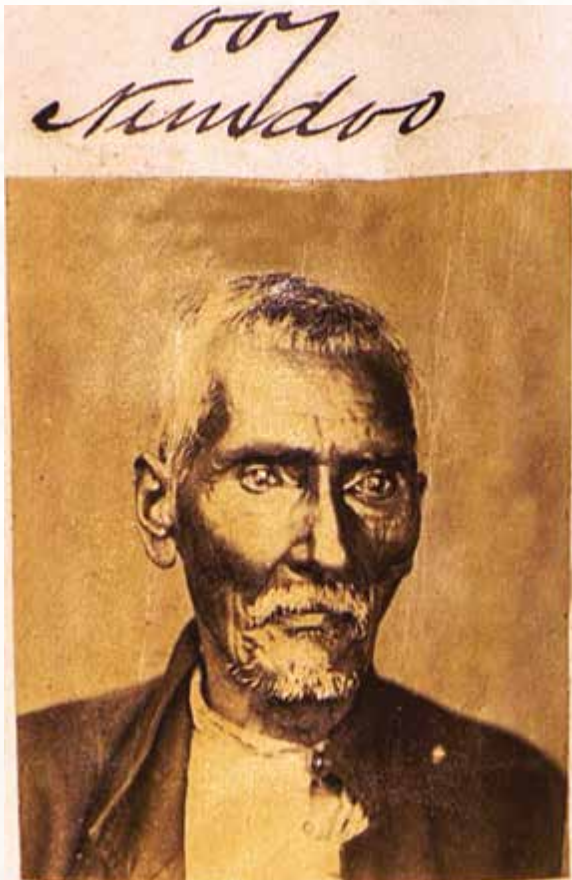


Fig 13a. Immigrant Nundoo No.321162 arrived in Mauritius in 1865 from the port of Calcutta when he was 53 years old. He arrived with his wife, Immigrant Gowree, son, Immigrant Auchoybur, daughter-in-law, and five grand children, including Immigrant Dookawah. He was from the village of Chanaree in the district of Arrah in western Bihar. He went to work as a labourer at La Baraque Sugar Estate in Grand Port district and registered as an old immigrant in 1870. He was photographed in 1872 at the age of 60, at the Immigration Depot. In 1876, he passed away at the age 63. By then, he had already retired as a labourer.

MGIIIA, PG, PE, and PF Series  
Courtesy Mr. S. Peerthum

MAHATMA GANDHI INSTITUTE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT Moka - Mauritius TEL: 433-7578 / 403-2037, FAX 433-7578 Email: mgarchives@yahoo.co			
Name of Immigrant	Nundoo	Photo No	
Immigrant Number	321162	Father's Name	Doster
		Mother's Name	
Next of Kin	Wife	Residence	
Age	53 Yrs	Sex	M
		Height	5 Ft 3
Marrned in India to	Gowree	Number	321162
Marrned in Mauritus to			
Place of Marriage		Date of Marriage	
Zillah	Arrah	Pergunnah	Sasaram
		Village	Chanaree
Port of Origin	Calcutta		
Name of Ship	Schastopol	Ship No	1129
Date of Arrival		Reached Depot Mauritus	
Employer's Name		Estate	
Distribution	25/09/1865	District	
Return to India Per		Date	
Died On	06/30/1876	Place	
Remarks	Wart under right eye		
Compiled by	V. Govinden	Name	Mr. Suryendra Peerthum
Head of Department	Mr. Jagan Baboo	Signature	
Signature		Address	Soliman No. 4 Victoria
		Date	30.05.2013
		ID/No	92705763000118

13b. The MGI Immigrant Certificate of Nundoo.

MGIIIA, Courtesy S.Peerthum

**Certified Extract of a Death Entry**  
(PUBLISHED BY THE CIVIL STATUS ACT 1981)

*Extrait Certifié du Certificat de Décès*  
(Conformément aux dispositions de la loi de 1981, règlement (F&SI) (CIV))

<b>Registration District</b> District de l'enregistrement	Grand Port	<b>Certificate Number</b> Numéro du Certificat	789
<b>Registration Office</b> Bureau de l'enregistrement	Mahebourg	<b>Date of Registration</b> Date de déclaration	30/06/1876
<b>Registered by</b> Enregistré par	Sydney Y.		

---

**DECEASED - DEFUNTE**

<b>Surname</b> Nom	Nundoo No.321,162	<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms			
<b>Occupation</b> Profession	No Calling Sans Profession		
<b>Address</b> Adresse	La Baraque, L'Escalier		
<b>Marital Status</b> Situation familiale	Married Marié	<b>Date and Time of death</b> Date et heure du décès	29/06/1876 17:00
<b>Religion</b> Religion	Hindu	<b>Sex</b> Sexe	M - Male/Masculin
<b>Place of Birth</b> Lieu de naissance	Calcutta	<b>Age</b> Âge	65 Year(s)/An(s)
<b>Place of Death</b> Lieu de décès	La Baraque Estate		
<b>Place of Burial/Cremation</b> Lieu de sépulture ou d'incinération			

---

**SPOUSE - CONJOINT(E)**

<b>Surname</b> Nom		<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms			

---

**FATHER - PERE**

<b>Surname</b> Nom	Bostice	<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms			

---

**MOTHER - MERE**

<b>Surname</b> Nom	Seebee	<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms			

---

**ANNOTATION(S) - MENTION(S)**

13c. A Civil Status Office document showing the bio-data of Immigrant Nundoo including his faith and when he died.

*Civil Status Office (CSO)/  
Courtesy S.Peerthum*

Fig 13d. Immigrant Auchoybur, a Hindu from Bihar, No.321163 arrived in 1865 at the age of 27 from the port of Calcutta. He was accompanied by his wife, Immigrant Bhoodheea, five children, including Immigrant Dookawah, and his father, Immigrant Nundoo and mother, Immigrant Gouree. One of his children remained in Calcutta, under unknown circumstances. He was a labourer on La Baraque Sugar Estate in Grand Port. He was registered and photographed as an Old Immigrant in 1870. He passed away at the age of 46 in 1889.

*MGIIIA/PG Series/PE and PF Series  
Courtesy Mr. S. Peerthum*



**MAHATMA GANDHI INSTITUTE**  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT  
Moka - Mauritius  
TEL: 433-7878/433-2037, FAX: 433-7074  
Email: mgaiarchives@netnet.mu

Name of Immigrant: Nundoo  
Immigrant Number: 321142 Photo No: \_\_\_\_\_  
Father's Name: Banno Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Next of Kin: Wife Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: 33 Yrs Sex: M Height: 5 Ft 1  
Married in India to: Gosses Number: 321110  
Married in Mauritius to: \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zillah: Arrah Parganah: Saverim Village: Chantre  
Port of Origin: Calcutta  
Name of Ship: Schatrupa Ship No: 1129  
Date of Arrival: \_\_\_\_\_ Reached Depot Mauritius: \_\_\_\_\_  
Employer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Distribution: 21/10/1889 District: \_\_\_\_\_  
Returns to India Port: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Died On: 26/30/1896 Place: \_\_\_\_\_  
Remarks: Was under right eye

(ISSUED TO)

Compiled by: Y. Gosselin I. Name: M. Veronique Perthes  
Head of Department: M. Nigam Kumar  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: Address No. 4 Yvonne  
Date: 26-30-1896  
ID/No: 927932610018

13e. The MGI Immigrant Certificate of Auchoybur

*MGIIIA Archives / Courtesy of S.Peerthum*

Fig 13g. Immigrant Dookawah No.321170 arrived in Mauritius at the age of 10 in 1865. He was engaged as a child labourer on La Baraque Sugar Estate along with his grandfather Immigrant Nundoo and his father Immigrant Auchoybur and his mother, Immigrant Bhoodheea.



In 1892, he was 37 years old when he was photographed at the Immigration Depot when he got married. He passed away at the age of 57 in Grand Port district.

*MGIIIA, PG, PE, and PF Series/Courtesy Mr. A. Dookawah*

**Certified Extract of a Death Entry**  
(Pursuant to the Civil Status Act 1981)  
Extrait Certifié du Certificat de Décès  
(Conformément aux dispositions de la loi de 1981 régissant l'état civil)

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS  
BUREAU DE L'ÉTAT CIVIL

Registration District: Grand Port  
District de l'enregistrement  
Registration Office: Mahébourg  
Bureau de l'enregistrement  
Registered by: Moutia E.  
Enregistré par

**DECEASED - DEFUNT(E)**

Surname: Auchoybur No 321,163  
Nom  
Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
Prénoms  
Occupation: Labourer  
Profession: Laboureur  
Address: Plaisance, Plaine Magnien  
Adresse  
Marital Status: Widower  
Statut familial: Veuf  
Religion: Hindu  
Religion: Hindou  
Place of Birth: Calcutta  
Lieu de naissance  
Place of Death: Plaisance Estate  
Lieu de décès  
Place of Burial/Cremation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lieu d'inhumation ou d'incinération

Certificate Number: 1134  
Numéro du Certificat  
Date of Registration: 31/10/1889  
Date de déclaration

Date and Time of death: 31/10/1889 04:00  
Date et heure du décès  
Sex: M - Male/Masculin  
Age: 57 - Year(s)/Année(s)  
Age

**SPOUSE - CONJOINT(E)**

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nom  
Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
Prénoms  
NID Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
No. de carte nationale d'identité

**FATHER - PERE**

Surname: Nundoo  
Nom  
Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
Prénoms  
NID Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
No. de carte nationale d'identité

**MOTHER - MERE**

Surname: Gowree  
Nom  
Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
Prénoms  
NID Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
No. de carte nationale d'identité

**ANNOTATION(S) - MENTION(S)**

13f. A Civil Status Office document showing the bio-data of Immigrant Auchoybur including his faith and when he died.

*CSO/Courtesy S.Peerthum*

## Immigrants Beekharry and Bundhoo: Father and Son Indentured Labourers



**Fig 14.** Immigrant Beekharry arrived in 1858 at the age of 32 from the port of Calcutta.

A Hindu from Bihar, he came to Mauritius with his wife, Immigrant Konjeea, and Immigrant Bundhoo, his son. He worked as a labourer on a sugar estate in the Savanne District.

He was photographed at the age of 53 at the Immigration Depot in 1879.

He passed away in 1886 at the age of 60.

*MGIIIA/PG Series/PE Series/PF Series/Courtesy  
Mr. A. Bundhoo*



**Fig 15.** Immigrant Bundhoo, a Hindu from Arrah district in western Bihar, arrived in Mauritius from Calcutta in 1858 when he was 5 years old.

He came with his parents, immigrants Beekharry and Konjeea. In 1863, when he was 10 years old he was engaged as a child labourer on a sugar estate in the Savanne district. Immigrant Bundhoo, was photographed in 1879 at the age of 26. He passed away when he was 66 years old in 1919.

*MGIIIA/PG Series/PE Series/PF Series/Courtesy  
Mr. A. Bundhoo*

## An Immigrant Ancestor Profile: Immigrant Dhuny



Fig 16. Immigrant Dhuny arrived in Mauritius in 1865 at the age of 14. He was a Hindu from the Chupra region of Bihar and belonged to the Malee sub-caste or vegetable sellers or cultivators of the Vaish caste. He was engaged as a labourer on La Fayette Sugar Estate, near present-day Poste La Fayette, in Flacq. He was photographed in 1896 at the age of 45 at the Immigration Depot.

*MGHIA/PG Series/PE Series/PF Series/Courtesy of  
Mr. D.Y.D. Dhuny*

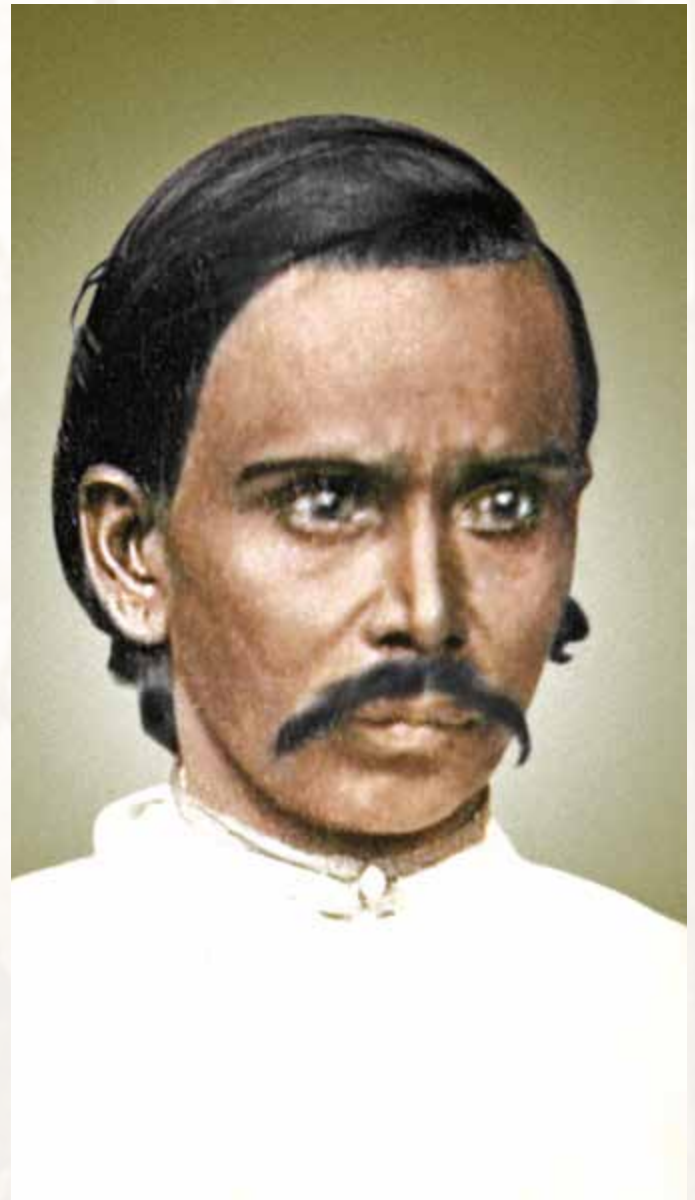


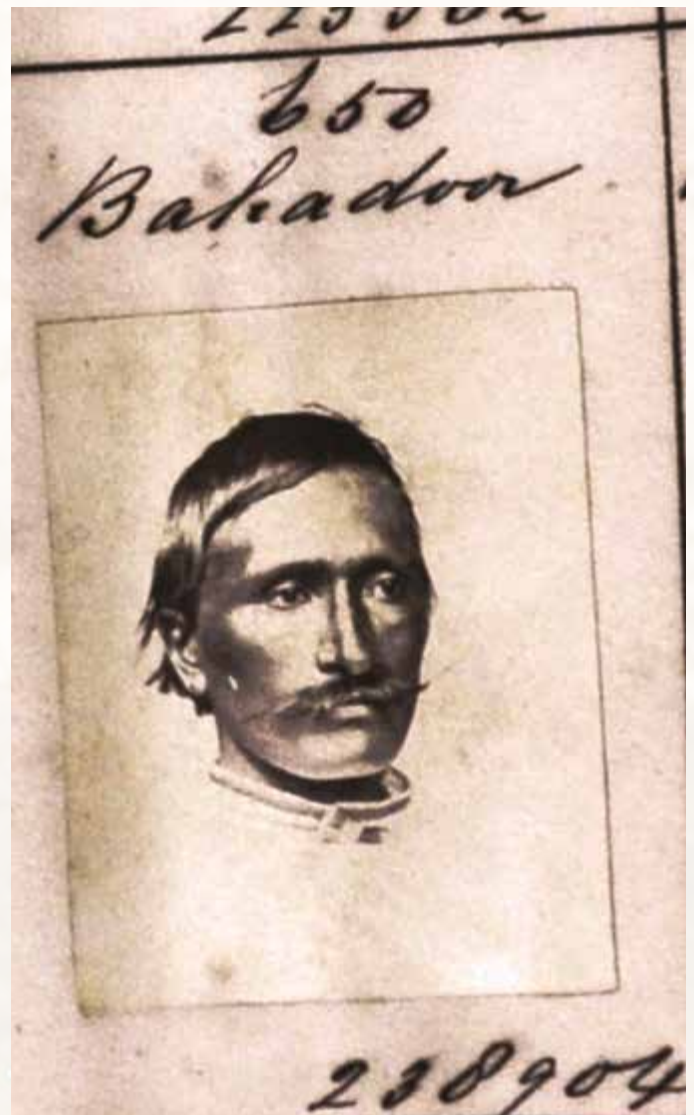
Fig 16b. Immigrant Dhuny's colorised picture by Deenal and Neeleesh Dhuny, two of his descendants

*Courtesy of D. Dhuny & N. Dhuny*



**Fig 17.** Immigrant Juwaheer landed in Mauritius in 1859 with his wife from Calcutta. He was originally from Bihar and he worked as a labourer on a sugar estate at Long Mountain in Pamplemousses District. In the 1870s, he worked as a labourer on a sugar estate in Vacoas in the district of Plaines Wilhems. He was photographed at the Immigration Depot in 1878.

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series/Courtesy of Mr. A. Juwaheer*

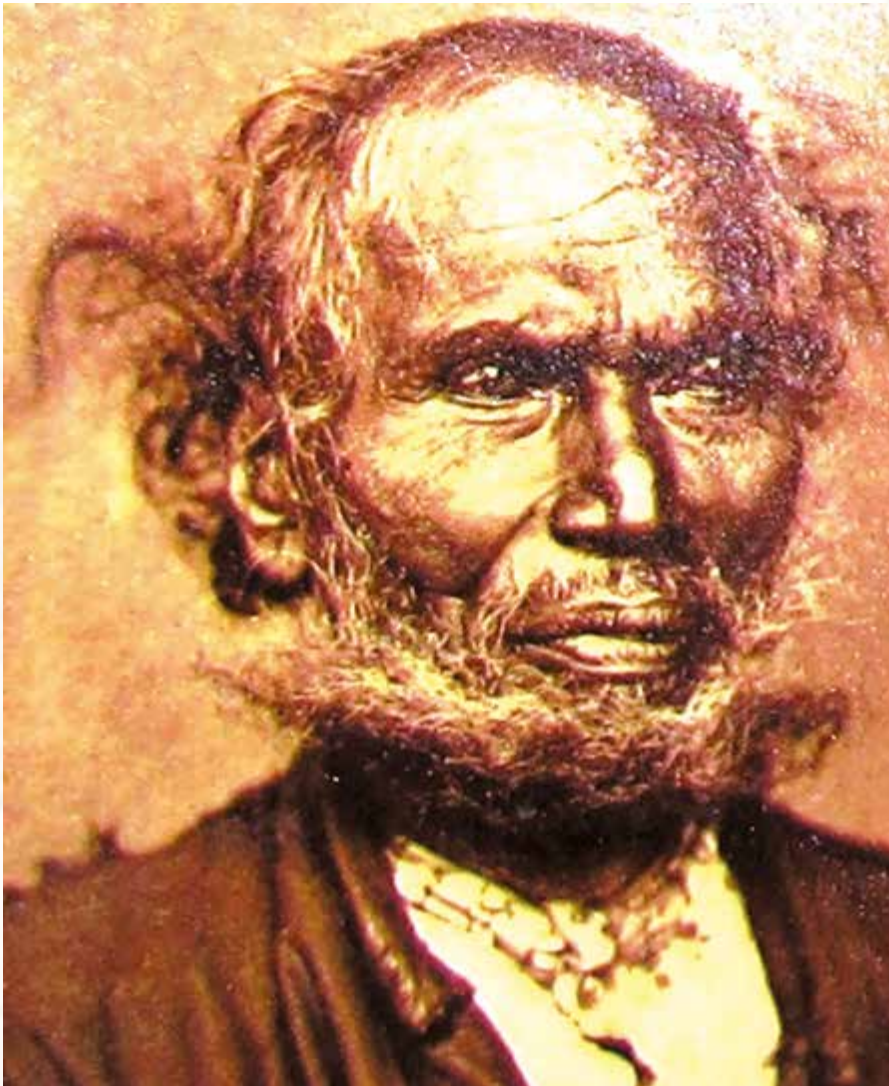


**Fig 18.** Immigrant Bahadoor arrived in Mauritius in 1859 when he was a child. During the 1860s, he worked as a child labourer. He was photographed in 1881, when he was in his thirties at the Immigration Depot. Bahadoor worked as a labourer on a sugar estate in Pamplemousses District.

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series/  
Courtesy of Mrs. Babita Devi Bahadoor-Rambhajan*



## Indentured Workers of the Muslim Faith



Throughout the entire indenture era, Muslims formed an integral part of the indentured labour population. Between 1826 and 1910, more than 67,810 or 15% of the total number of indentured workers arriving from India were Muslim adherents. The largest number emigrated from as far-flung regions as Andhra, Telangana, and Pondicherry, practically from all parts of the Indian Sub-Continent.

**Fig 19.** Immigrant Bavasaib, a Muslim indentured labourer, arrived from Calcutta in 1837 at the age of 40.

He was from the Madurai District in present-day Tamil Nadu. In 1817, he left his village to work in Madras and a decade later, he sailed for Calcutta where he worked in the port area for many years.

In 1891, when he was granted a return passage, Bavasaib spent several weeks at the Immigration Depot before returning to Madras. He had lived and worked for more than 54 years in Mauritius.

*MGIIIA/PG Series & PE Series*

Peerkhan was 50 years old when he arrived in Mauritius from Calcutta in 1828. He was born in a village in West Bengal in 1778 and was a Muslim. Peerkhan was engaged to work for Mr Sampson, a British merchant and planter, for five years on his sugar estate in Flacq District.

Lallmahomed	Calcutta	35
Ammeer	"	30
Mottee	"	35

*Photo 101967-16-4-86-1.65.*  
13/11/41

**Fig 20.** Immigrants Lallmahomed, Ammeer and Mottee, three Muslim indentured labourers from Bihar, arrived in Mauritius in the late 1830s. They lived long and productive lives on the island and gradually passed away during the late 1880s.

*MGIIIA/PE and PF Series / Courtesy of Mottee family*



Fig 21. Immigrant Mottee arrived in Mauritius in 1836. This 35-year old man was a Muslim from Dakkah district in northern Bihar. He was photographed at the age of 85 at the Immigration Depot in 1886. He passed away in 1889 at the age of 88.

MGIII/PG & PE Series/  
Courtesy of Mottee family.

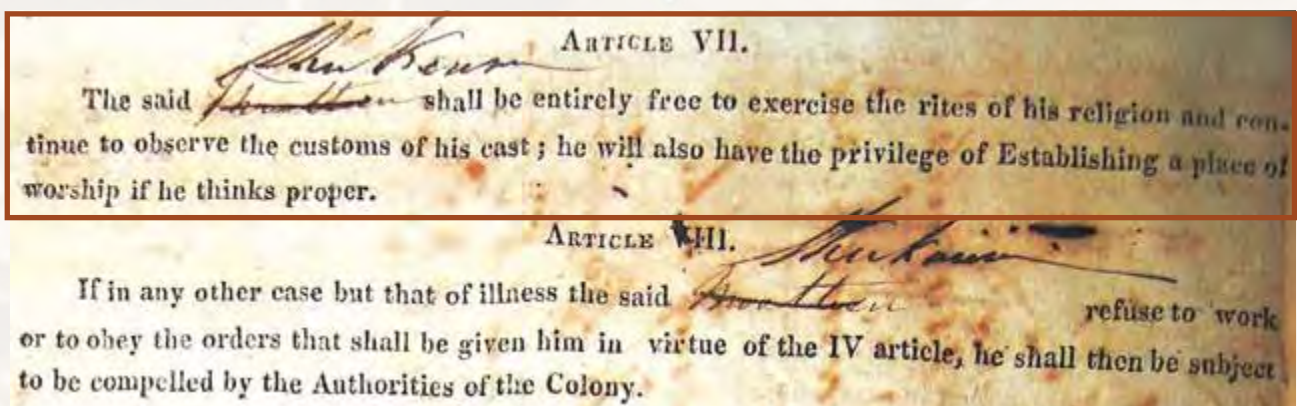


Fig 22. Article VII of the Labour Contract of Immigrant Shaikoussen, a Muslim indentured worker, who arrived in Mauritius in 1838. The Article stipulates his free right to exercise his religion as one of the contractual guarantees of the worker

MNA/RA Series



**Fig 23. Immigrant Imamally arrived as a 3-year old child from Madras in 1856. He was a Muslim from the Arcot District of present-day Tamil Nadu. He worked as an indentured labourer and was photographed when he was 38 years old at the Immigration Depot in 1892.**

*MGIIIA/PG Series/PE Series*

## Indentured Workers Adhering to the Christian Faith



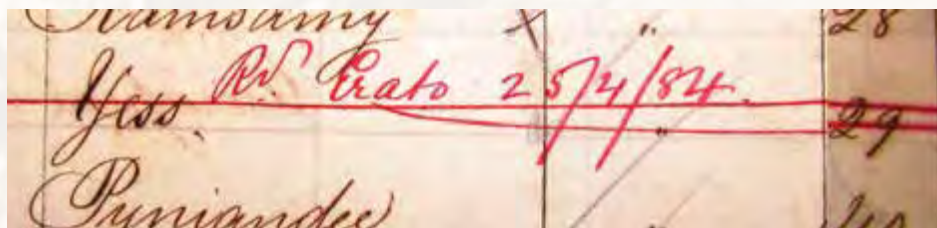
Christians accounted for around 1% or more than 4,520 of the total number of indentured workers came from India between 1826 and 1910. They came pre-eminently from the Tamil-speaking districts of Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Karikal and a few emigrated from Bihar. One notes an intensive inflow of Indian Christian workers from present-day Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry between the 1840s and 1870s, which roughly coincided with the arrival of some of the Liberated Africans, Malagasy, East African, Comorian and Chinese indentured workers who were Christians or embraced Christianity in Mauritius.

**Fig.24. Immigrant Bastien Atim, a 45 year old Christian indentured labourer, from the Trichinopoly District of present-day Tamil Nadu, arrived in Mauritius from the port of Madras in 1837.**

**He was photographed at the age of 83 at the Immigration Depot in 1875. He passed away at the age of 93 in 1885.**

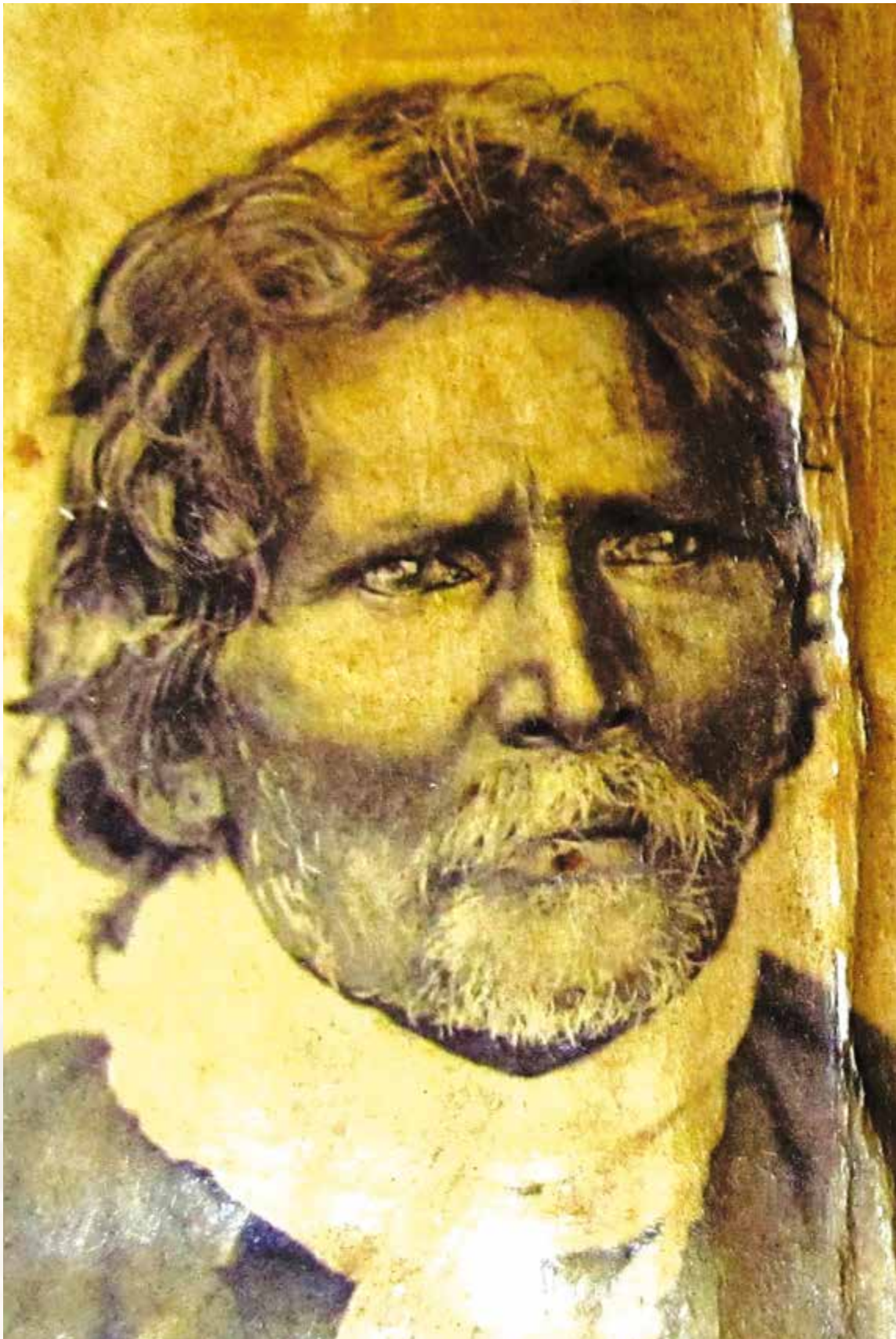
*MGIIIA/PG Series & PE Series*

Alusep Paylo (Immigrant No. 656) and Pailo Payly (Immigrant No. 657) reached Mauritius on 14 June 1838 at the age of 30 from the port city of Cochin. They were both born in 1808. Paylo and Payly were engaged for five years as labourers on Mr Hardy's sugar estate in the district of Flacq.



**Fig 25. Immigrant Yess, a Christian indentured labourer aged 29, arrived in Mauritius from Madras in 1838. He returned to India in 1884 after having worked and lived for more than 46 years in Mauritius.**

*MGIIIA/PG Series & PE Series*



**Fig 26. Immigrant Anthone was a Christian Indian indentured worker from the town of Bangalore. He arrived in Mauritius in 1861 at the age of 25. He was photographed at the age of 55 at the Immigration Depot in 1891. He passed away at the age of 75 in 1911.**

*MGIIIA/PG Series & PE Series/  
Bio-data compiled by A. Nemchand, Research Assistant, AGTF*

# Chapter Three

# The Geographical Diversity of the Indentured Labourers

## The Bihari Indentured Labourers

	Orissa	Bengal			Bihar	NW Provinces
		Western	Central	Eastern		
British Guyana	719	14,028	2,166	238	24,681	25,551
Mauritius	3,116	33,131	8,951	1,118	108,156	47,286
Trinidad	378	8,396	1,305	176	11,278	16,027
Jamaica	147	3,214	341	106	4,496	4,654
Natal	2	216	24	356	370	-
Réunion	19	1,667	171	29	4,027	4,469

Table 5. The importance of Bihar, Bengal and the North West Provinces or Uttar Pradesh in the recruitment of indentured labourers for Mauritius and other British Overseas Colonies.

Report of J. Geoghegan (1874), p.70 /  
Reproduced from Teelock (2009), p.235

Bihar was one of the sub-provinces of the Bengal Presidency under British rule in the 19th century. Its location in the hinterland of the port of Calcutta, besides the prevailing socio-economic factors, contributed in making it the most important source of indentured labour. In 1874, J. Geoghegan, a British colonial official in India, observed that between 1842 and 1870, around two-thirds of the total number of contractual workers who landed in Port Louis harbour came predominantly from Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and the United Provinces in North-East India and passed through the port-city of Calcutta.

The first large-scale importation of indentured labourers from Bihar took place in 1831 when 151 workers were transported to Mauritius from Calcutta by Messrs Lylall, Matheson & Company who acted as agents for Mr John Shaw Sampson, a British planter and merchant. The labourers were engaged on a group contract of five years on Mr Simpson's sugar estate in Rivière du Rempart District. They were required to work in the sugar cane fields, tend to his cattle, repair the pathways and roads on and near his estate and perform other menial work, as and when required by the estate manager.



Fig 27. An Indenture Labour Contract in Bengali between a group of Indian indentured workers and, Annasamy, an Indian planter, which was drafted in July 1835.

MNA/RA Series

Fig 28 (a) and (b). *Le Cernéen*, a pro-planter colonial newspaper, announcing the arrival of Arbuthnot's 36 indentured labourers from Calcutta and highlighting the terms and conditions of their indenture contract.

NL/*Le Cernéen*, 14 November 1834

*L'Hurkaru*, journal de Calcutta, publie dans son numéro du 12 Septembre, la notice suivante qui mérite de fixer l'attention des planteurs de la colonie.

" Il a été contracté, en présence de M. Macfarlan, principal magistrat de Police, et entre M. Arbuthnot agissant pour le compte de la maison Hunter, Arbuthnot & Co. de Maurice, et trente-six coolies indiens, un engagement aux conditions et à l'effet suivants."

" Les coolies doivent se rendre à Maurice, où ils seront employés comme travailleurs (*labourers*) sur une plantation à sucre, où ils resteront l'espace de cinq années, s'ils en sont requis."

" Leur passage à Maurice sera payé par MM. H. A. & Co, ainsi que leur retour dans l'Inde, dans le cas où ils rempliraient les termes de leur engagement, mais non dans le cas contraire."

" Les hommes recevront cinq roupies par mois, et les femmes quatre; mais la proportion du nombre de celles-ci ne pourra être que de cinq sur trente. Elles devront exécuter les mêmes travaux que les hommes, qui consisteront à faire des trous de cannes, à les nettoyer et à les chausser, et à s'acquitter de tous les travaux de l'intérieur de la sucrerie. Leur tâche journalière sera fixée par le gérant de la propriété."

" L'un des 36 coolies sera employé comme serdar et payé à raison de 10 roupies par mois; il aura sous ses ordres, comme sous-chef, un des coolies qui recevra 8 roupies par mois."

" MM. H. A. & Co s'obligent, dans le cas où les coolies viendraient à quitter leur emploi, à empêcher qu'ils ne deviennent à charge au gouvernement colonial."

" Il sera fait sur la paye de chaque coolie une retenue d'une roupie par mois, jusqu'à ce que le montant de cette retenue puisse couvrir les frais du retour à Calcutta; toutefois dans le cas où les coolies resteraient employés jusqu'à la fin des cinq années, cette somme leur serait rendue."

" Outre les gages ci-dessus mentionnés, les vivres et les vêtemens leur seront fournis ainsi qu'il suit: à chaque homme deux livres de riz, une demi-livre de dalle, deux onces de sel, un peu d'huile et de tamarin; et à chaque femme les mêmes objets, moins une demi-livre de riz. Et à chaque individu, et par an, quatre *dhoties*, un *chudder*, deux couvertures, une veste et deux bonnets."

" Chaque individu recevra six mois d'avance; les gages commenceront à courir du jour de l'embarquement."

" Chaque coolie sera individuellement, solidairement responsable de la stricte exécution de l'engagement par tous les autres et par chacun d'eux séparément."

P. LEVETTE, Gérant responsable.

Names of 36  
Immigrants

By Geo. S. Arbuthnot.

Soroop Sirdar	X	Lungone	X
Sabaram Mole	X	Callachand	X
Bhoodhoo	X	Bhalak	X
Champak	X	Jesara Bhoodhoo	X
Bhumbhoo	X	Sibehun	X
Chooncomin	X	Chota Bhandhoo	X
Julloo	X	Deenram	X
Chota Bhoodhoo	X	Budhiram	X
Bachoo	X	Muggroo	X
Orjoon	X	Harcah	X
Ranmohun	X	Choyun	X
Sookram	X	Choolungo	X
Dhiram	X	Bhagprath	X
Ghanpa	X	Gingaram	X
Bhoowun	X	Chota Muggroo	X
Chota Choonelall	X	Chota Dhiram	X
Nigna	X	Sookhun	X
Aukbap	X	Bhamarak	X

169 36

Fig 29a. The list of names of the 36 Bihari immigrants who arrived in Mauritius on Sunday, 2nd November 1834.

MNA/RA Series



Fig 29b. Immigrant Bachoo arrived in Mauritius on 2nd November 1834 on the ship the *Atlas* along with Soroop Sirdar. He was 15 years old and a tribal from a village on the Chota Nagpur plateau in present-day Jharkhand. Between 1834 and 1839, he worked as a labourer on Antoinette Sugar Estate. By the 1860s and 1870s, he became a job contractor and a small land owner. He was photographed at the age of 55 in 1874 at the Immigration Depot. He passed away in 1906 at the age of 87 in Pamplemousses district.

MGIIIA/PG & PF Series & MNA/RA Series

Fig 29c. Immigrant Jhurry arrived in Mauritius at the age of 20 in 1832. He was a Bengali labourer from a village in the 24 pergunahs near Calcutta. He worked as a cane-cutter on Beau Séjour sugar estate in Rivière du Rempart district. He was photographed at the age of 64 in 1874 at the Immigration Depot.

MGIIIA/PG, PE and PF Series & MNA/RA Series







**Fig 30. Immigrant Gungadeen arrived in Mauritius in 1834 from Calcutta.**

**He was born in Bihar and classified as a Hindu. He was photographed in 1885 at the age of 86 at the Immigration Depot.**

*MGIIIA/PG & PE Series*



**Fig 31. Immigrant Peeretram arrived in Mauritius in 1837 from Calcutta.**

**He was born in Bihar and classified as a Hindu. He was photographed when he was 72 years old at the Immigration Depot in 1881.**

*MGIIIA/PG & PE Series*

Three years later, on 2nd November 1834, 36 contract workers from Bihar arrived in Port Louis on board the Atlas. They were landed with the approval of Governor Nicolay near the present-day surviving stone structures of the Customs House by Mr Arbuthnot, a British planter and merchant settled in Mauritius.

A copy of their group contract was deposited at the Police Headquarters in Port Louis and at the Customs House, where they were given an immigrant number. The arrival of these indentured labourers is commemorated as a national public holiday each 2nd November in Mauritius, ever since 2001, by the Government of Mauritius.

Ship *Louisa Baillie* from *Calcutta*

Captain *W. Whittington* arrived on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1844

Nominal List of Immigrants consisting of \_\_\_\_\_ MEN, \_\_\_\_\_ CHILDREN, LANDED ON THE \_\_\_\_\_ 22<sup>nd</sup> January 44

Name of the Immigrant	Years Employment	State of the Value or Rank of the Immigrant	Children		REMARKS
			Males	Females	
<i>Govindally</i>	35	<i>Sabgar</i>			
<i>Sardharay</i>	30	<i>Doctanah</i>			
<i>Shomaroo</i>	35	<i>Dooghar</i>			
<i>Biharie</i>	18	<i>Schurick</i>			
<i>Melouich</i>	12	<i>Someroon</i>			
<i>Amudice</i>	30	<i>Dooghar</i>			
<i>Boodun</i>	20	<i>Shivodun</i>			
<i>Murridigher</i>	35	<i>Shaydigher</i>			
<i>Kingjouning</i>	30	<i>Kolumbar</i>			
<i>Reddick</i>	30	<i>Shivodun</i>			
<i>Mumchurning</i>	30	<i>Shivodun</i>			
<b>Women</b>					
<i>Shivodun</i>	25	<i>Shivodun</i>			
<i>Shivodun</i>	18	<i>Shivodun</i>			
<i>Shivodun</i>	16	<i>Shivodun</i>			
<i>Shivodun</i>	30	<i>Shivodun</i>			
<i>Shivodun</i>	20	<i>Shivodun</i>			

Fig 32. A Ship Register showing the arrival of the *Louisa Baillie* from Calcutta in January 1844, with Bihari Hindus, Muslims and Tribals on board.

MGIIIA/PE Series

During the 1870s, a large number of Bihari indentured workers emigrated through the port of Calcutta. Referring to the volume of the outflow, G. Geoghegan, a senior British colonial official, stated: “It thus appears that the province of Bihar has contributed more than one-half of the Calcutta emigration.” Over one hundred and thirty years later, Marina Carter observes that “this clearly demonstrates the significance of the Biharis to the movement of indentured labour as a whole”.

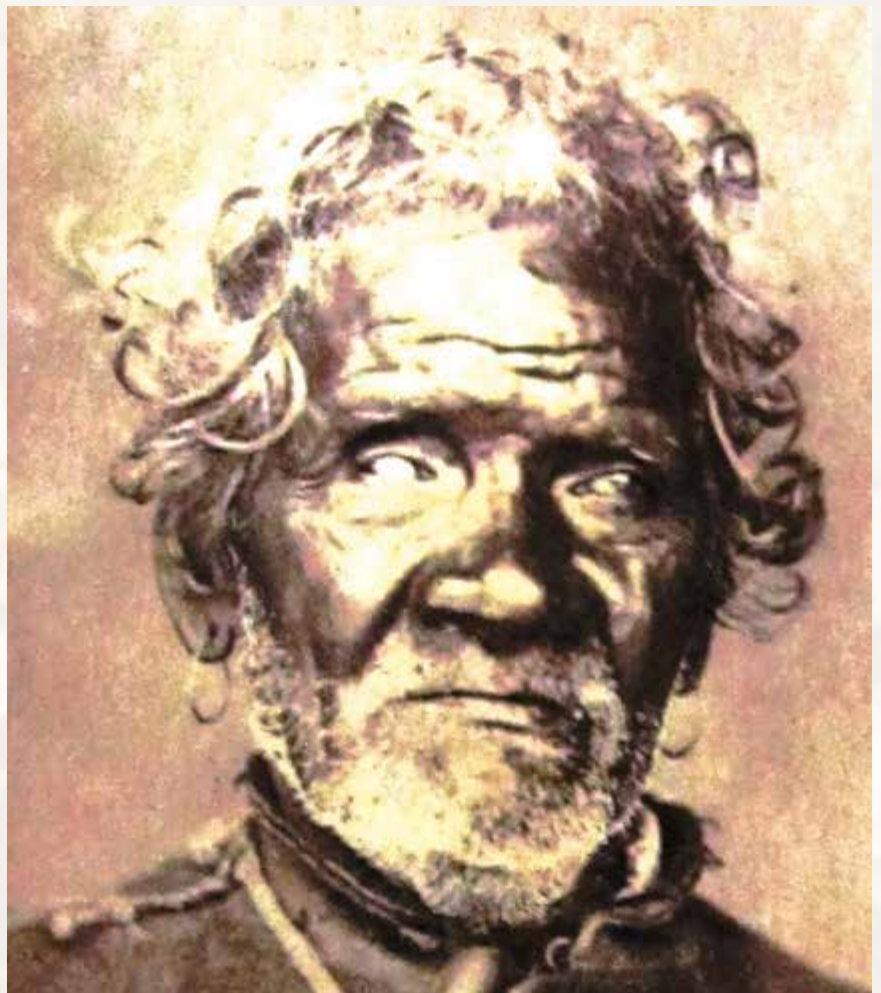


Fig 33. Immigrant Gopaul was a Hindu labourer from Bihar. He arrived in Mauritius in 1837 at the age of 45, and served as a labourer on different sugar estates and in the police department.

He was photographed when he was 92 years old in 1884. Gopaul passed away at the age of 94.

At the time of his death, the Protector of Immigrants reported that he was the oldest living ex-Bihari indentured labourer in the colony.

MGIIIA/PG and PE Series/  
MNA/PB Series

## VISUALIZING THE PAST II

### The Archival Documentation of Immigrant Nundloll: A Case-Study



Nundloll  
88016

Fig 34a. Immigrant Nundloll arrived in Mauritius from Calcutta in December 1849.

He was from Puroli district in West Bengal and of mixed Bihari and Bengali descent.

He was photographed at the age of 57 in 1887.

MNA/PB Series

**EMIGRATION CERTIFICATE.**

Emigration Office, Calcutta.  
The 31<sup>st</sup> December 1849

Name	Father's Name	Sex	Age	Remarks
Nundloll	Darson	Male	19	Had a small hole in the left collarbone

Certified that I have examined and passed the above described as a fit subject for Emigration, being *had the small pox* and being now free from all bodily disease.

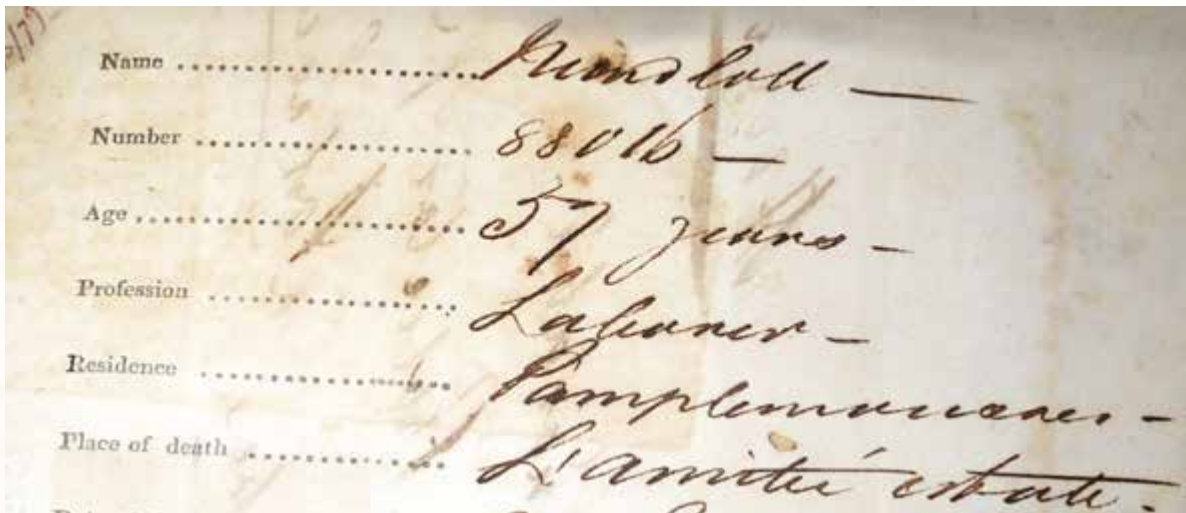
} *McCalland*  
Surgeon.

I hereby certify that the *above* above described, when I have engaged as a labourer on the part of the Government of Mauritius, has appeared before me, and I have explained to *him* all matters concerning *his* as an Emigrant proceeding to the Mauritius according to Clause 10<sup>th</sup> of Schedule attached to her Majesty's Order in Council of 10th January, 1842.

*McCalland*  
Surgeon.

Fig 34b. According to Immigrant Nundloll's Emigration Certificate, he belonged to the Koyree caste. He was 19 years old when he arrived and was engaged as a labourer on Mon Loisir sugar Estate in Rivière du Rempart district.

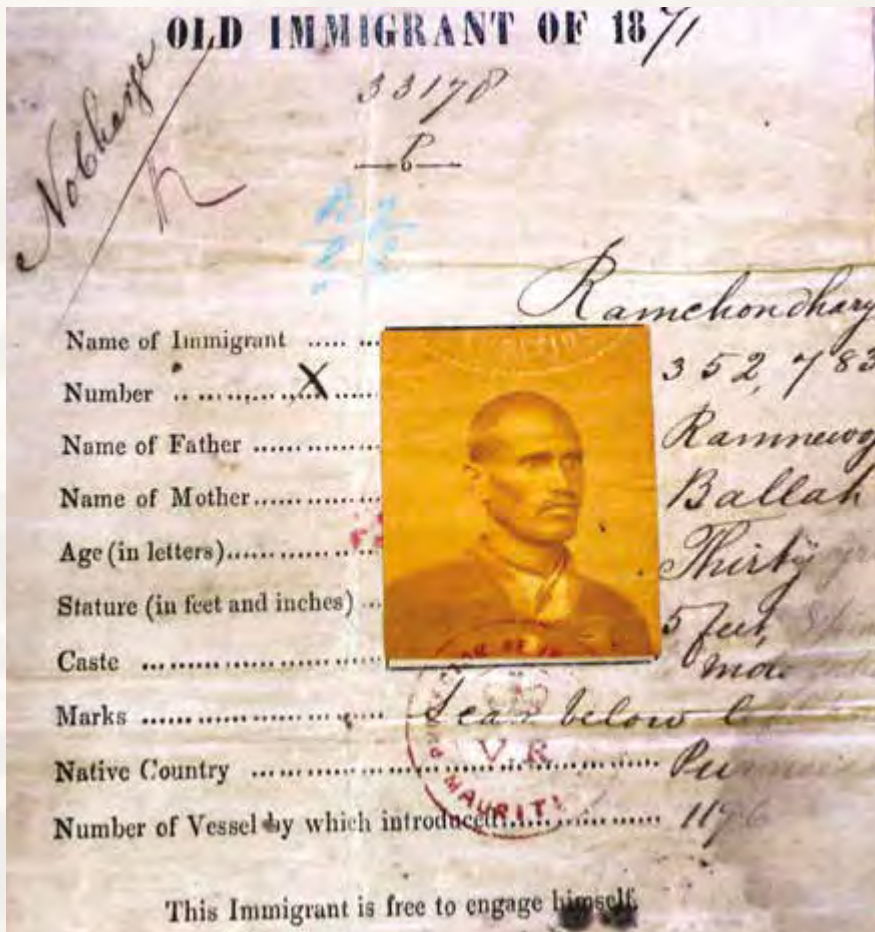
MGIIIA/PC Series/Courtesy of Mr. S.Peerthum



**Fig 34c.** During the 1870s, Immigrant Nundloll worked as a labourer on L'Amitie sugar estate in Pamplemousses district. Shortly after, he passed away.

*MNA/PB Series/Courtesy of S.Peerthum*

More than 181,064 labourers or around 40 percent of all indentured workers who were landed in Port Louis came from present-day Bihar and Jharkhand between 1826 and 1910. The majority of them transited through the Mauritius Emigration Depot at Bhowanipore and the Immigration Depot in Port Louis between 1849 and 1910. Two-thirds of these workers were adult males between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five and were preponderantly Hindus, and tribals, with a small number of Muslims and Christians.



**Fig 34d.** Immigrant Ramchondhary No.352,783 arrived in Mauritius in 1871 when he was 30 years old. He was from the village of Purmeesa in Gaya district, Bihar.

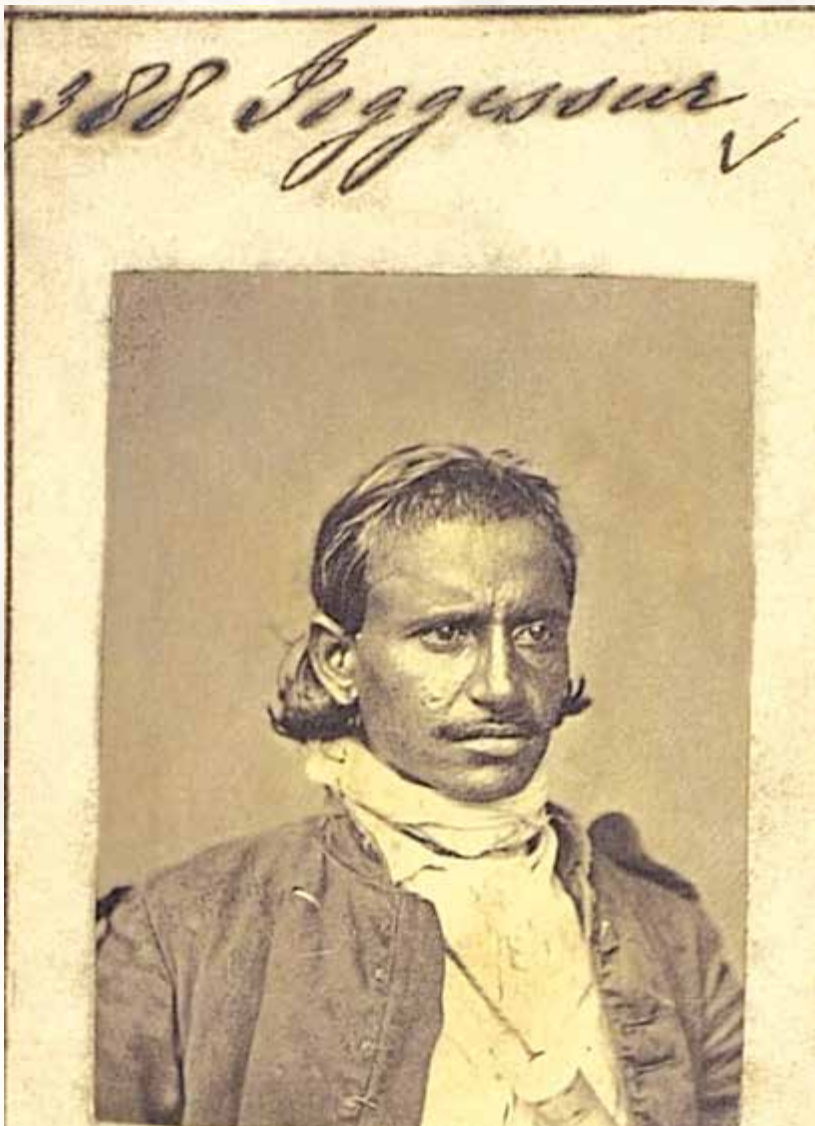
In 1876, when he was issued his Old Immigrant Ticket, Ramchondhary was described as being “free to engage himself” by the Protector of Immigrants.

*MNA/PB and RA Series*

## VISUALIZING THE PAST III

### The Unique Photo Documentation of Immigrant Joggessur (1877-1907)

The current stage of research indicates that the PG Series or Immigrant Photo Collection and PH Series or the Vagrant Photo Register Collection in the custody of the MGI Indian Immigration Archives, 4 indentured immigrants were photographed on three occasions between 1865 and 1914 at the Immigration Depot in Port Louis. One of these immigrants was Immigrant Joggessur who between 1887 and 1907 was photographed on three separate occasions. Today, an estimated 175,000 immigrant photos exist in the PG Series and an estimated 2700 vagrant pictures are located in the PH Series which are unique in terms of photographic archival documentation in the world.



**Fig 35a. Immigrant Joggessur arrived in Mauritius at the age of 18 from the port of Calcutta.**

**He worked as a labourer on a sugar estate in the Flacq District.**

**He was registered as an Old Immigrant in 1877 and he was photographed at the age of 24 wearing his tin ticket which contained his immigrant identification papers.**

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series/  
Courtesy of Mrs. S.Jogessur-  
Peerthum*



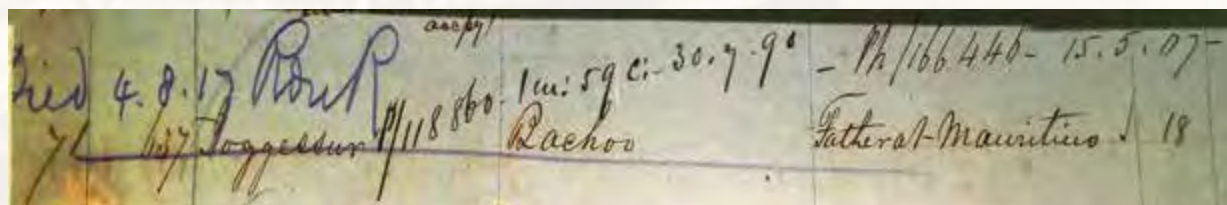
**Fig 35b.** Immigrant Joggessur was a Hindu from Arrah District in Bihar. He was 37 years old when he was photographed for the second time at the Immigration Depot. He changed employers as he moved from Queen Victoria Sugar Estate in Flacq district to Mon Loisir Sugar Estate in 1890.

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series/Courtesy of Mrs. S. Jogessur-Peerthum*



**Fig 35c.** Immigrant Joggessur was photographed for the third time at the age of 54 at the Immigration Depot, 1907. By then, he was residing in the village of Rivière du Rempart. He is believed to have been a small landowner. He passed away in 1917 at the age of 64 at Poudre d'Or Hospital.

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series/CSO/ Courtesy of Mrs. S.Jogessur-Peerthum*



**Fig 35d.** The ship arrival register showing the arrival of Immigrant Joggessur in 1871. Bachoo, his father, arrived a short time earlier.

*MGIIIA/PE Series/Courtesy of Mrs. S.Jogessur-Peerthum*

# VISUALIZING THE PAST IV

## The Desire to Own Land: The Story of Immigrant Rampal and the Purchase of Bon Acceuil Sugar Estate

Current research is indicating that according to the Notarial Acts of the Mauritius National Archives, the Notary Index of the Registration of the Deeds and Documents System Database of the Registrar General's Department (RGD), the Transcription Volume (TV) Series of the RGD's Land Registration and Mortgage Office, and the Report Books of the Registrar General's Department, the former indentured workers and the Indo-Mauritians had a much greater involvement when it came to land ownership, access to financial resources, and their contribution to the local economy as previous studies have shown.

Between 1875 and 1925, around 44 official notaries recorded a total of 22,503 land purchases and land sales involving 35,105 former Indian indentured workers, other former contract labourers, and Indo-Mauritians (first, second, and third generations) for a total value of Rs.45,301,234 or Rs.45.3 Million. By 1921, there were an estimated 15,202 small planters, landowners, and small cultivators who were former indentured immigrants and Indo-Mauritians. It is estimated they owned 46% of the island's arable land and cultivated a total of 51% of the island's rich arable agricultural land.

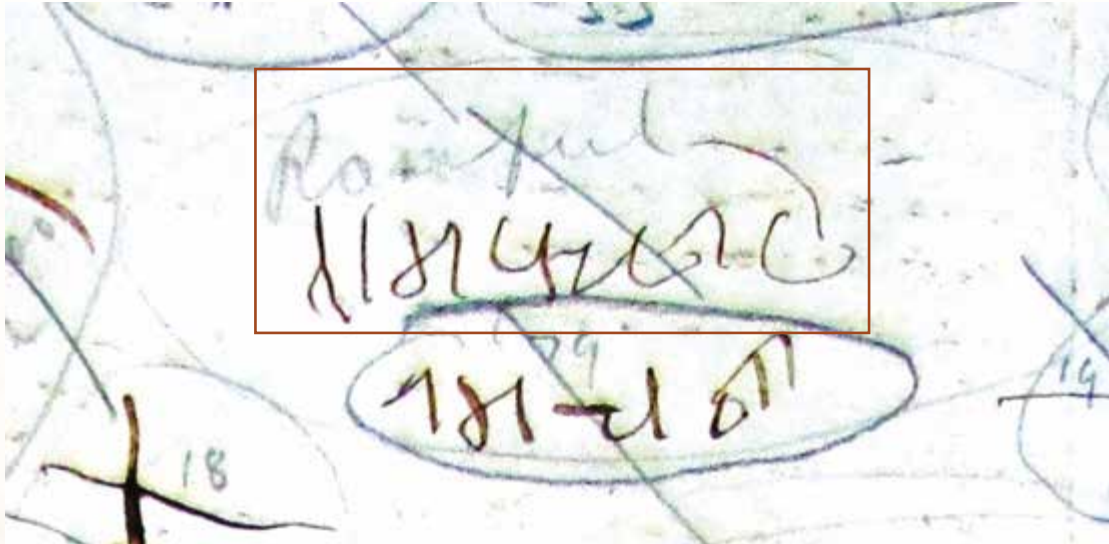
From 1875 to 1925, this long, complex, and vast socio-economic process of land purchases, sales, and the parcelling of large and small estates has been called the *Grand Morcellement* movement by Dr. Richard Allen. During this period, many of these landowners were Bihari former indentured workers, other North Indian former indentured labourers, and their children and grandchildren, namely first and second generation Indo-Mauritians. This can clearly be seen in the case-study of the purchase of Immigrant Rampal and the purchase and parcelling of Bon Acceuil Sugar Estate.

**Table 6: Notarial Transactions and RGD records involving the Former Indentured Workers and their Descendants between 1875 and 1925<sup>7</sup>.**

No.	Type of Notarial Transaction	Number of Transactions	Monetary Value of the Transactions
1.	Land Purchases & Land Sales	22,503	Rs.45.3 Million
2.	Loan Agreements and Repayments	45,600	Rs.18.3 Million
3.	Land Lease & Building Rent Agreements, Metayage Agreements	63,900	Rs.16.2 Million
4.	Bequests, Wills, Financial Concessions, Marriage Agreements, and other transactions	10,701	Rs.9.6 Million
	Grand Total	142,704	Rs.89.4 Million

7. MNA/Notarial Acts (NA), NA 95, C. Pelte Collection to NA 148, LeVieux Collection; Registrar General Department (RGD), Notary Index, Registration of Deeds and Documents System Database; RGD, Transcription Volume Series (TV), TV 92 for (1864 -1867) to TV 448 for (1921 - 1929); RGD, Report Book of the Registrar General's Department Volumes 4 to 13 for 1871 to 1930.

Note: The information which is being presented here is part of an on-going and long-term research project in the notarial acts dealing with the socio-economic mobility among the indentured labourers.



**Fig 36a.** In June 1894, Immigrant Rampul purchased three tracts of arable land totaling around 11 arpents for more than Rs.5,500 from Mr. Jules Boyer de la Giroday and his mother, Widow Mrs. Dela Giroday, the co-owners of Bon Accueil Sugar Estate. Rampul signed the notarial act drafted by Notary Robert Koenig which shows that he could read and write.

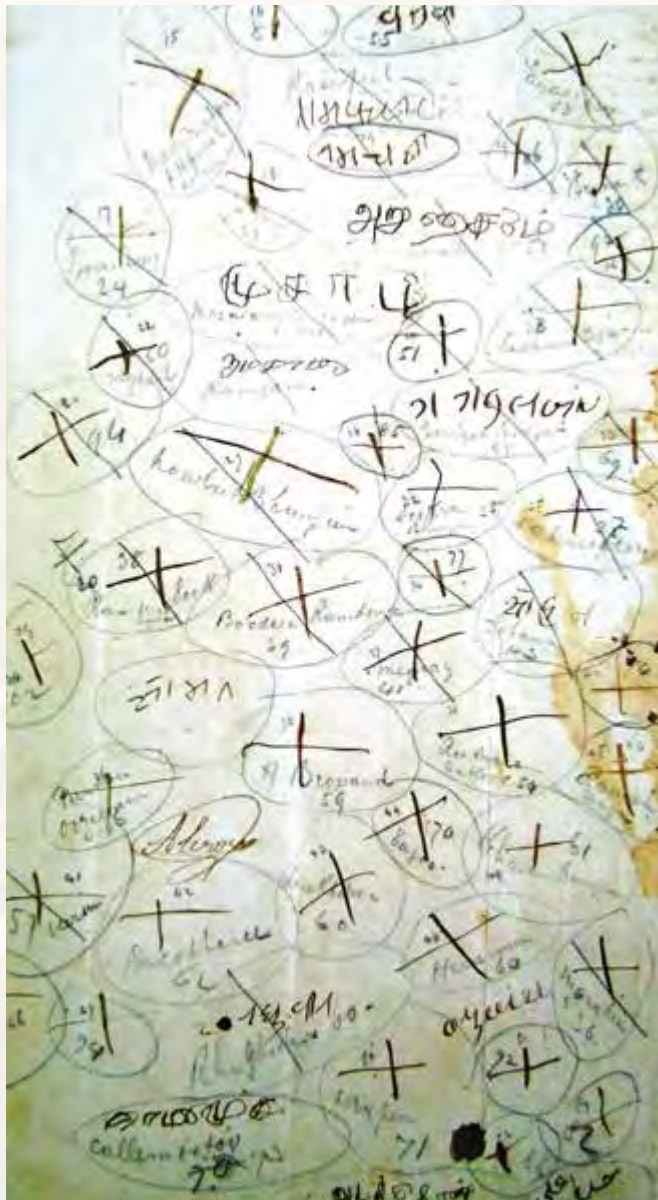
*MNA/NA Records, Koenig Collection*

**Fig 36b.** This notarial act report contained the signatures of around 102 Indian Immigrants and Indo-Mauritians, around three quarters were of Bihari and North Indian origin.

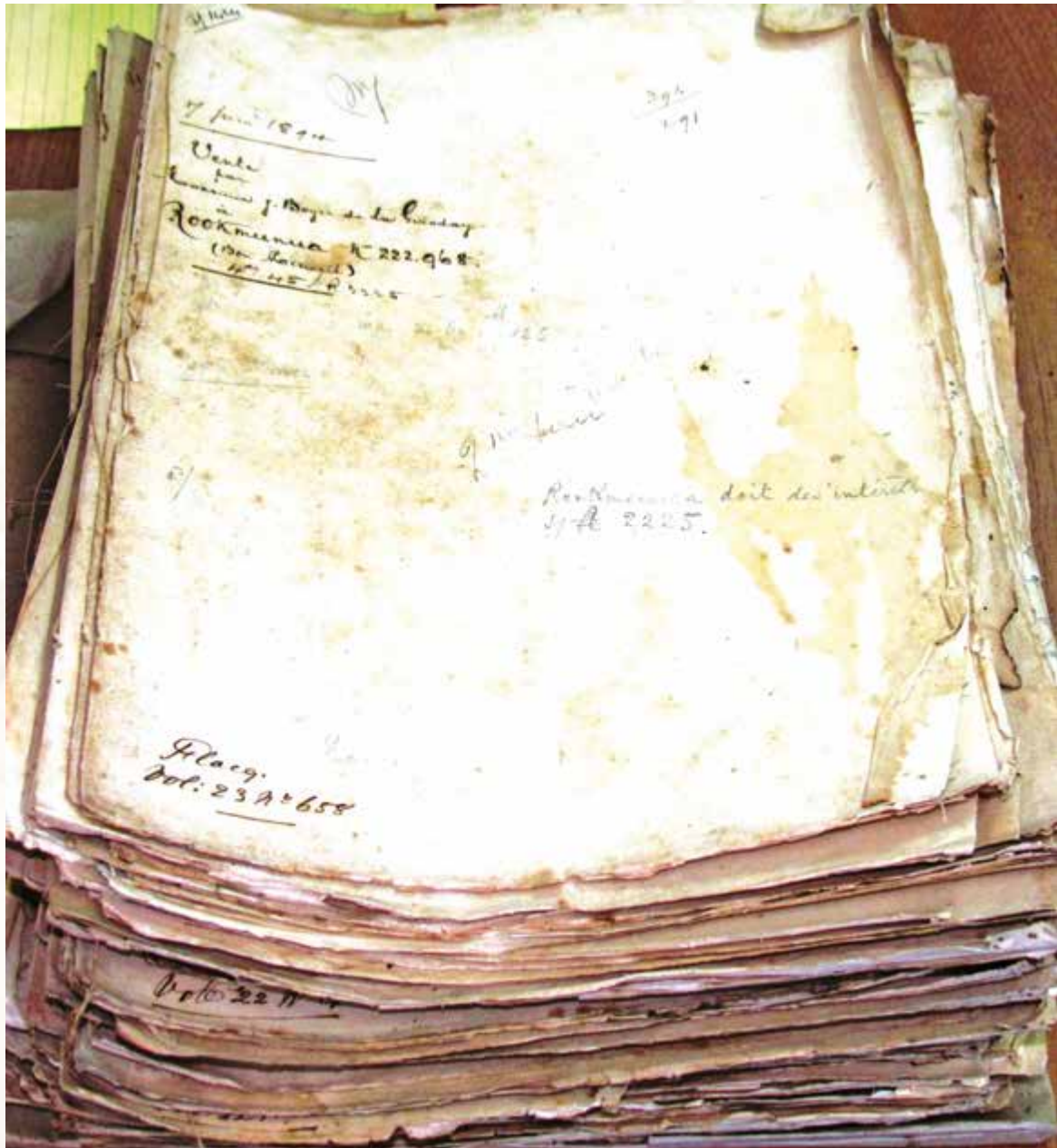
The particular page to the right contains the signatures and marks of around 51 Indians and Indo-Mauritians including two dozen Bihari ex-indentured workers.

On 7th and 8th June 1894, around 91 notarial deeds were registered by Notary Koenig on behalf of the Girodays. As a result, 91 plots of land were sold to 102 individuals or 71 former Indian indentured workers and 41 Indo-Mauritians. This collective land sale involved a total of 151 arpents being sold for over Rs.50,000.

*MNA/NA Records, Koenig Collection*







**Fig 36c. The aforementioned 91 notarial deeds of June 1894 were officialised within two days by Mr. Jules Boyer de la Giroday through his notary, Mr. Koenig.**

**Over 50% of the Indian immigrants and Indo-Mauritians purchasing these plots of land were longtime employees and metayers on Bon Acceuil Sugar Estate. They were already small land owners and cultivators and resided in the north central Flacq area.**

**Between 1894 and 1902, the Girodays sold 491 plots 2,000 arpents involving 552 Indians and Indo-Mauritians for a sum exceeding Rs.200,000.**

**Within 8 years, at the height of the Great Morcellment movement, this small sugar estate, of northern Flacq was sub-divided and its ownership passed from the hands of a prominent Franco-Mauritian family into that of hundreds of Indian immigrants and Indo-Mauritian who were mostly of Bihari and north Indian origin.**

*MNA/NA Records, Koenig Collection*

1410 Ship S.S. "SURADA" Arrived 8<sup>th</sup> August 1910

Ship No.	NAME	Name of Father.	Name of Mother.	Sex.	Age.	Sort of Race	
2	3	4	5	6	7	Name.	...
1	Bansi <i>Left by T.S.M. Solong on 22/12/10</i>	Gurdayal	Somaria	M	18	Shankar	...
2	<del>Bhat</del> Jagunni Bhat	Bhagia	Bhagia	M	20	Chlitar	...
3	<del>Lakhia</del> <i>Left by "Shute" on 16/10/1910 (7.P.)</i>	Chamma	Subhagia	F	23	Jafaria	...
	<del>Jadda</del> <i>Left by "Savala" on 16/10/1910 (7.P.)</i>	Rangila	Lakhia	B	2	Lakhia	...
	Eharia	Behari	Somaria	F	24	Daroga	...
	Sarja	Shoghulam	Kalli	M	20	Shoghulam	...
	Gohind	Deha	Sevani	M	22	Deha	...
	Shiraji	Dukchar	Samma	F	22	Deha	...

Fig 37a. A Ship Register showing the arrival of the *Surada* which carried the last batch of Bihari indentured labourers from Calcutta in August 1910. It was the last indenture ship to arrive in Mauritius, however the indentured Immigrants were disembarked, registered, and distributed at the Pointe aux Cannoniers Quarantine Station and not at the Immigration Depot.

MGIII/PE Series

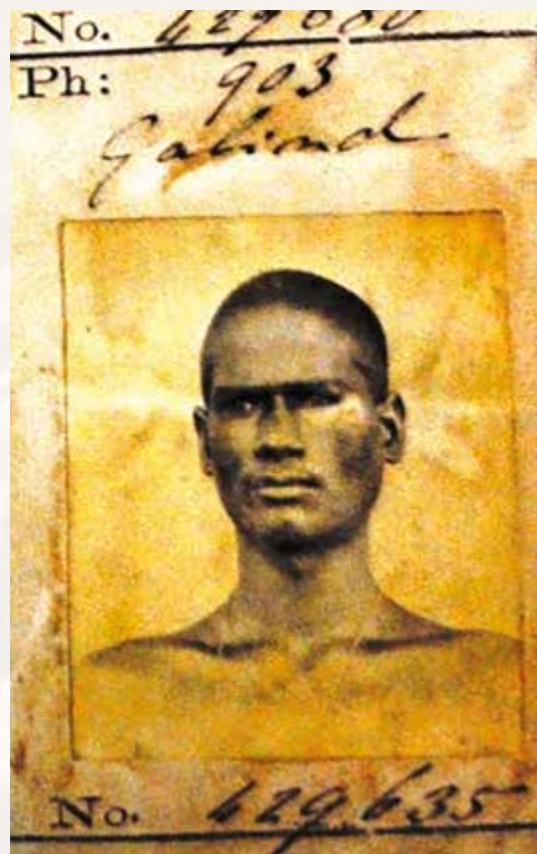


Fig 37b. Immigrant Gohind arrived on the *Surada* in August 1910. He was 22 years old and was from Bihar. Gohind was photographed shortly after his arrival. He was engaged as a labourer on Gros Bois sugar estate in the south of the island.

MGIII/PG and PE Series/Courtesy of Dr. D. Gohind

Fig 38. Immigrant Bhupal arrived in Mauritius from Calcutta in 1910. He served a five-year contract as a labourer on Saint Hubert Sugar Estate in Grand Port District.

He was issued a certificate of discharge in 1915.

He was among the last of the newly-landed Bihari indentured workers to serve a full five-year contract as a cane cutter on a Mauritian sugar.

MGIIIA/PF and PE Series -  
Courtesy of Mr. V. Bhupal

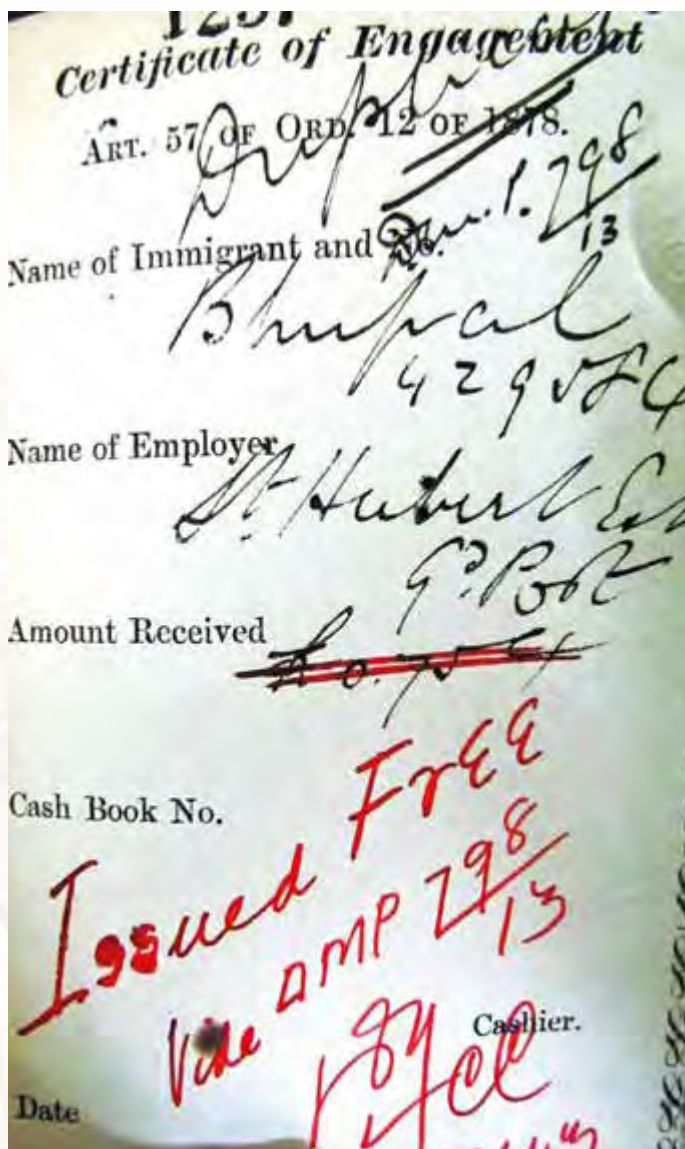
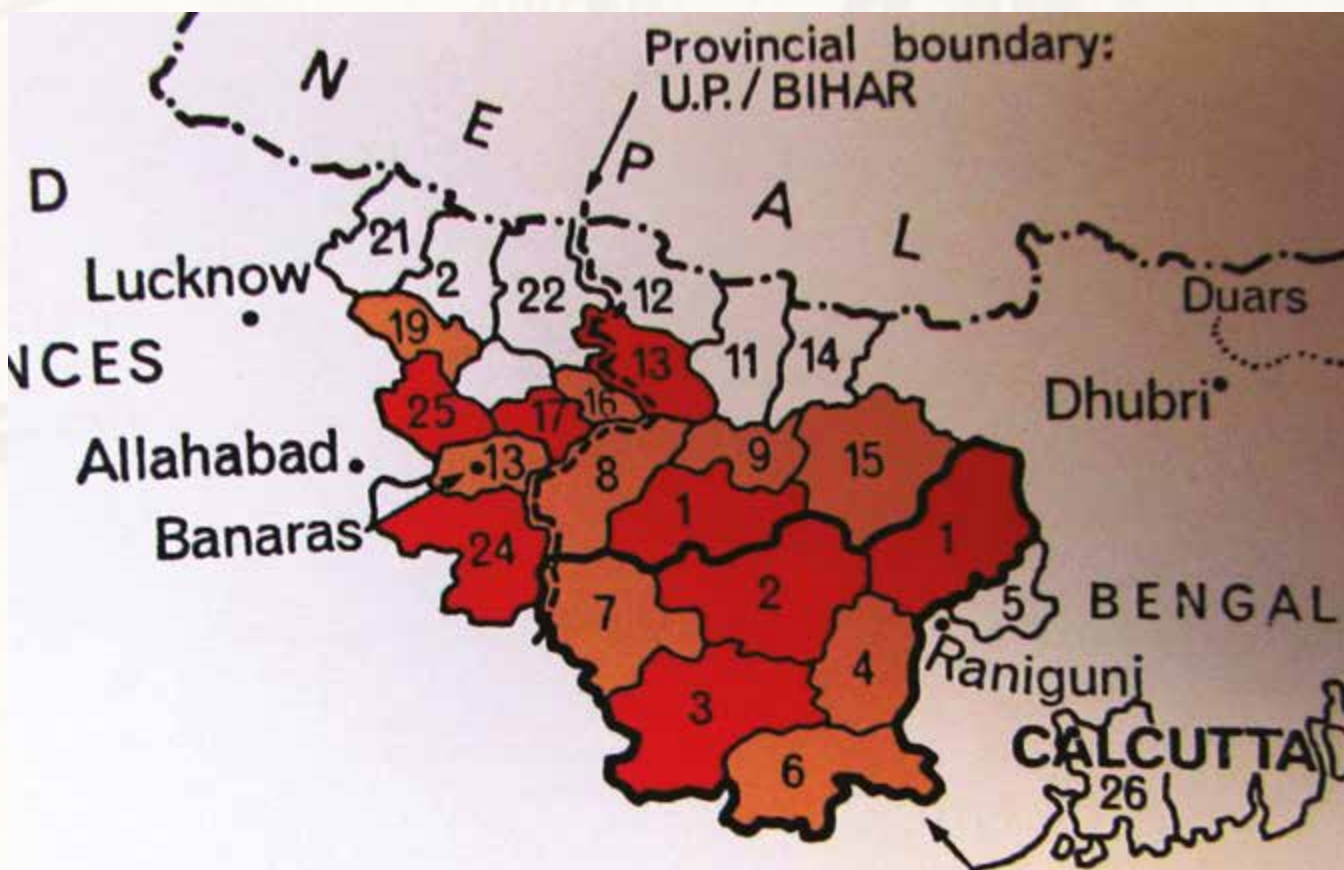


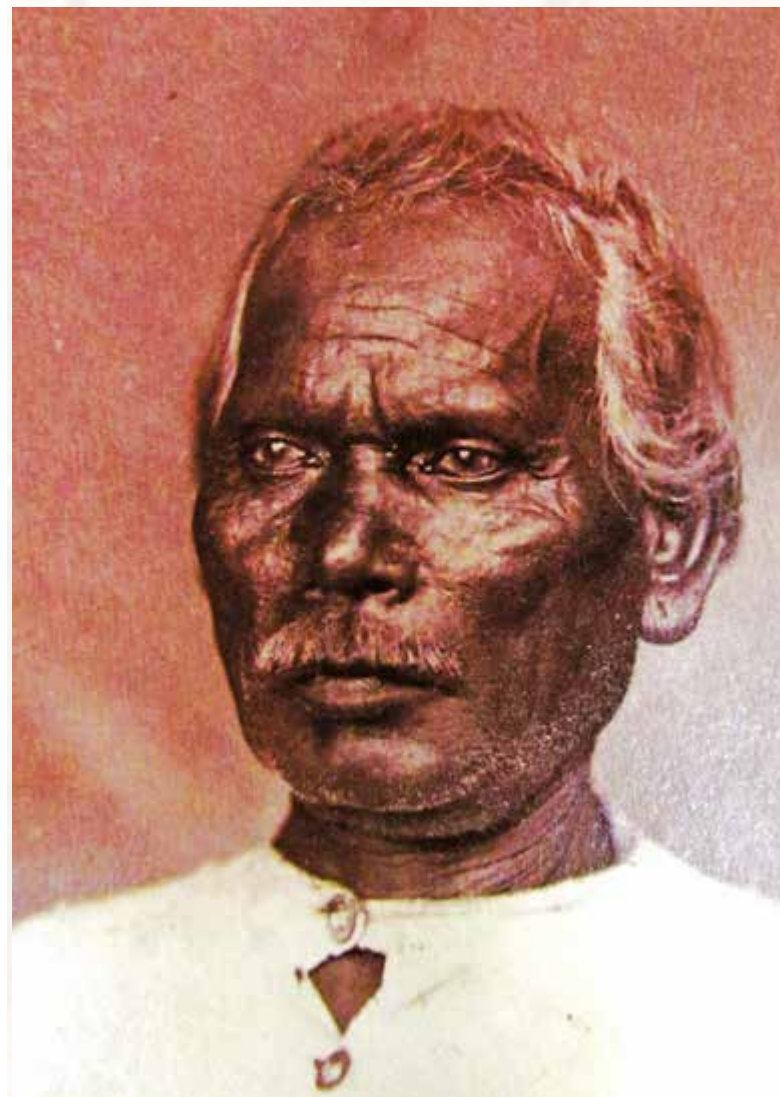
Fig 39. The Main Regions and Districts of recruitment of Bihari indentured labourers in Bihar and its vicinity in the 19th century .

AGTF Collection, 2017



## Immigrants from other parts of Northern India

While the bulk of the north Indian indentured workers originated from present-day Bihar and Jharkhand, tens of thousands also came from other parts of northern India. Between 1826 and 1910, around 18% or 81,138 Indian labourers proceeded mainly from present-day Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Hariyana, Jammu, Kashmir, and Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and even from parts of present-day Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.



**Fig 40.** Immigrant Balliah was 30 years old when he arrived in Port Louis in 1837. He was a danghar or tribal from a village in the district of Ballia in Uttar Pradesh.

He was photographed at the age of 81 at the Immigration Depot in 1888.

*MGIIIA/PG Series/PE Series*



**Fig 41.** Immigrant Seenah or Seenat, a Hindu from a village in the district of Gorakpur in Uttar Pradesh, arrived in Mauritius at the age of 32 in 1838.

He was photographed at 81 years old at the Immigration Depot in 1887.

*MGIIIA/PG Series/PE Series*

A l'honneur de vous exposer respectueusement  
Patchoo Laboureur Indien, demurant au quartier de  
Flacq, qu'il était engagé au service de M. Ulog, et  
que d'un commun accord avec lui, il vient de  
racheter le temps non encore expiré de son engagement.

L'Exposant ayant l'intention d'aller de  
résider encore plusieurs années dans cette colonie,  
où il a la certitude de s'employer beaucoup plus  
avantageusement que dans L'Inde, Supplie  
qu'il vous plait,

excellence,

lui accorder un permis de résidence sa  
conduite a toujours été paisible, et aucune  
plainte ne s'est portée contre lui jusqu'à

Report  
3<sup>me</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> 1840.  
I have seen the Petitioner  
"Patchoo" who states that he was  
born at Calcutta, he came here in  
the service of Mr. Ulog as a Labourer  
and has paid Money to be free from  
his Engagement.  
He cohabits with a Creole  
Woman who has a small Piece of  
Ground at the Camp de Marque-  
and if permission of Residence is  
given him will endeavour to  
find a Master, who will take  
him as a servant.

Fig 42 (a) and (b). Immigrant Patchoo, a Bengali immigrant born in a village in the Bancoorah region of West Bengal, arrived in Mauritius in 1836 to work on a sugar estate in Flacq. In 1840, he paid the remaining one-year of his indenture contract, and petitioned the Governor for authorization to reside in the colony as a labourer.

He stated that he was living with an ex-apprentice woman in the same district. His request was eventually granted by Governor Lionel Smith.

MNA/RA Series

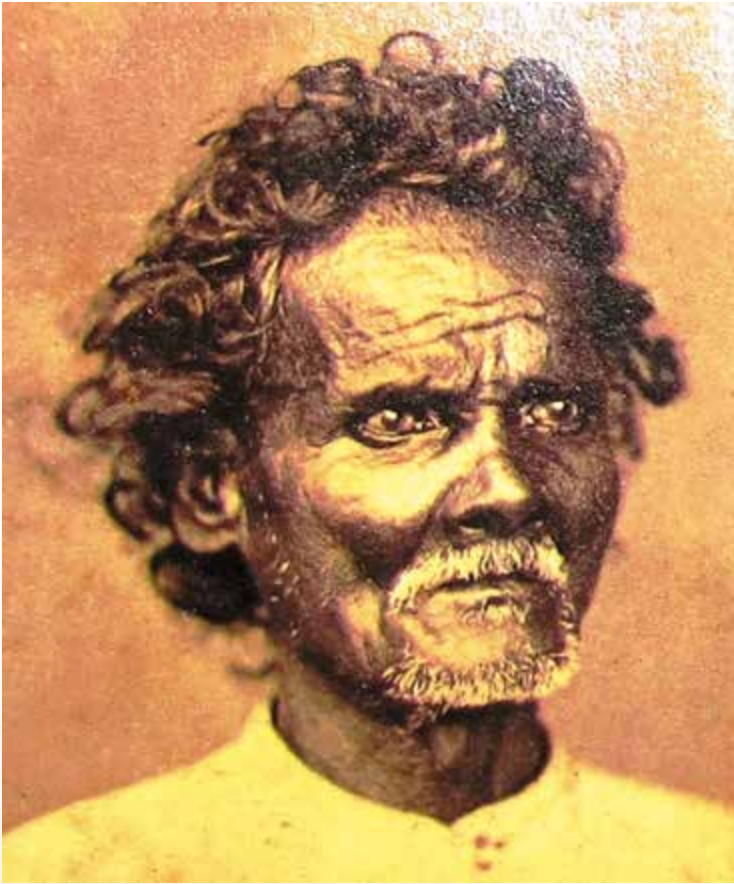


Fig 43. Immigrant Bollah arrived in Mauritius at the age of 30 in 1839 from a village in the Midnapore region of West Bengal.

He was described as being a “Bengalee” and a Hindu. Bollah was photographed at the age 72 at the Immigration Depot in 1881.

MGIIIA/PG Series/PE Series



Fig 44. Immigrants Mookhunsing and Peertum, who were both sirdars, and other indentured immigrants, from the Hariyana region of north central India, arrived in Mauritius in 1843.

MGIIIA/PE Series

“Calliope” from Calcutta

Name	Father's name	Place
Bauluck	Behouthy	Monroe
Boothy w.	Nurkoo	do
Luthoo	Hurdoyal	Banbro
Morgan w.	Jugoo	do
Alghangoo	Lookan	Gutha
Jugoo w.	Hoseey	do
Shubally	Karamun	Burhito
Shyopocaw	Buccoo	do
Soondur	Poolall	Quinnip
Mingly w.	Bhotanauth	do
Jamby	Murree	Burhoo
Paybata w.	Bundhoo	Quinnip
Sudhan	Borfanauth	do
Mohamud w.	Riproop	Subhoo
Kutary	Latta	do
Beebly w.	Deelah	Singh
Sorubkhan	Mungoo	do

Fig 45. Immigrant Bauluck and other indentured labourers, from the Madhya Pradesh region of north central India, reaching Mauritius on board the Calliope in 1857.

MGIIIA/PE Series

## VISUALIZING THE PAST V

### Immigrants Gunputh and Mungur: A Case-Study of Lifelong Friendship among Indentured Workers<sup>8</sup>

Immigrants Gunputh and Mungur set foot on Mauritian shores in the late 1870s. Oral testimonies collected from their descendants reveal that they grew up together, in the same village in northern India, and considered one another as adoptive brothers. Recruited as indentured workers, together they made the journey to Calcutta by train, and travelled on the same ship to Mauritius. Upon their arrival, both Gunputh and Mungur were allocated to work on a sugar estate in Flacq where they resided in the same estate camp.

In 1884 and 1895, they completed their indenture contracts and were registered as Old Immigrants together. On two occasions, they went together to be photographed at the Immigration Depot. In 1889 and 1904, they purchased and became joint owners of two small plots of land. They lived on the same plot of land which they planted and cultivated. In 1905, Gunputh passed away and Mungur looked after his widow and children.

The life journey of Immigrants Gunputh and Mungur an eloquent story of lifelong friendship and brotherhood between two indentured immigrants during the Age of Indenture, which is remembered and celebrated each year by their descendants.

**Fig 46. Immigrant Gunputh arrived in Mauritius in 1878 at the age of 25.**

**He was from Sekhunpore village in the Ghazipur District of present-day Uttar Pradesh.**

**Gunputh was photographed when he was 31 years old at the Immigration Depot in 1884.**

*MGIIIA/PG/PE/PF Series/  
Courtesy of  
Mrs. Obeegadoo*



**Fig 47. Immigrant Mungur, the lifelong friend and adoptive brother of Gunputh, arrived in Mauritius in 1878 at the age of 22.**

**Both Mungur and Gunputh were from Sekhunpore village in Ghazipur District, present-day Uttar Pradesh. Mungur was photographed when he was 28 years old at the Immigration Depot in 1884.**

*MGIIIA/PG/PE/PF Series/  
Courtesy of  
Mrs. Obeegadoo*



8. The Story of Immigrants Gunputh and Mungur, Courtesy of Mrs. Obeegadoo.

## The Tamil Indentured Workers in Mauritius

One of the most important segments of the indentured labour population was enlisted from the Madras Presidency or Southern India. Between 1826 and 1910, an estimated 25% of the Indian indentured workers or around 113,017 men, women, and children came to Mauritius from present-day Tamil Nadu or the Tamil-speaking districts of South India.

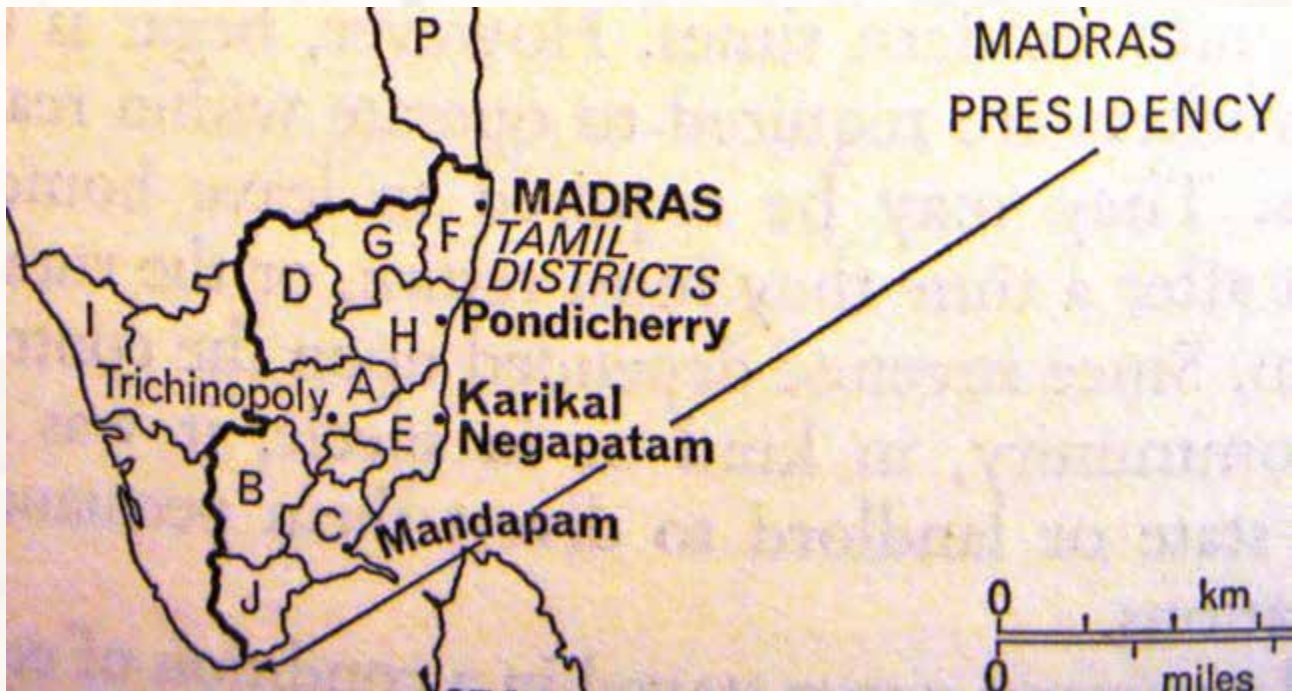


Fig 48. The Main Districts and Regions of recruitment of Tamil-speaking indentured labourers (1826 - 1910).

*Tinker (1974)*

NAME	PRESIDENCY	AGE	STATURE	DISTINGUISHING MARKS	RESIDENCE	TO WHOM FIRST ENGAGED	DATE OF ARRIVAL IN THE COLONY
Laffur	Calcutta	35	6'11"	Scar across back	Flacq	Donadieu	1835
Chalapin	Madras	29	5'11"	Arrest tattoo	Flacq	Gaillardon	1830
Seria Gaspen		25		Scar under shoulder		Darifat	1839
Bowman	Calcutta	20					

Fig 49. Chalapin, a 29 year old Tamil immigrant, came to work as a cane cutter for Mr. Gaillardon in Flacq District in 1830.

*MGHIA/PE Series*



Mesotoosamy	✓	Sondichey	25
Anoomunden	✓	Madras	35
x Ramon	x		40
Obeeram	9/7/51	Calcutta	35
Sadoo	✓	"	36
Varguenaden	Moorgapulle	Madras	28
14/83 Parsin	18/11/78	"	35
x Chamoo	x	Calcutta	26
Sathoo	✓	"	40
Moothoo	✓	Madras	25
x Sabapaty	x	"	26
x Veerasamy	x	"	24

**Fig 50. List of Indentured Tamil immigrants who arrived in Mauritius between 1835 and 1839.**

*MGIIIA/PE Series*

The first Tamil indentured workers arrived in Mauritius in the late 1820s and early 1830s. In 1826, Armogum and Curpench came to work on a five-year contract as estate workers. In 1830 and 1833, Chalapin and Ramsamy were engaged as indentured labourers in the employment of Mr. Gaillardon and Mr. Langlois in Port Louis. Gaillardon & Company played a key role in the importation of around 1500 Indian and Chinese labourers in Mauritius from August to October 1829, the majority emanating from Madras and some from Calcutta and Singapore.

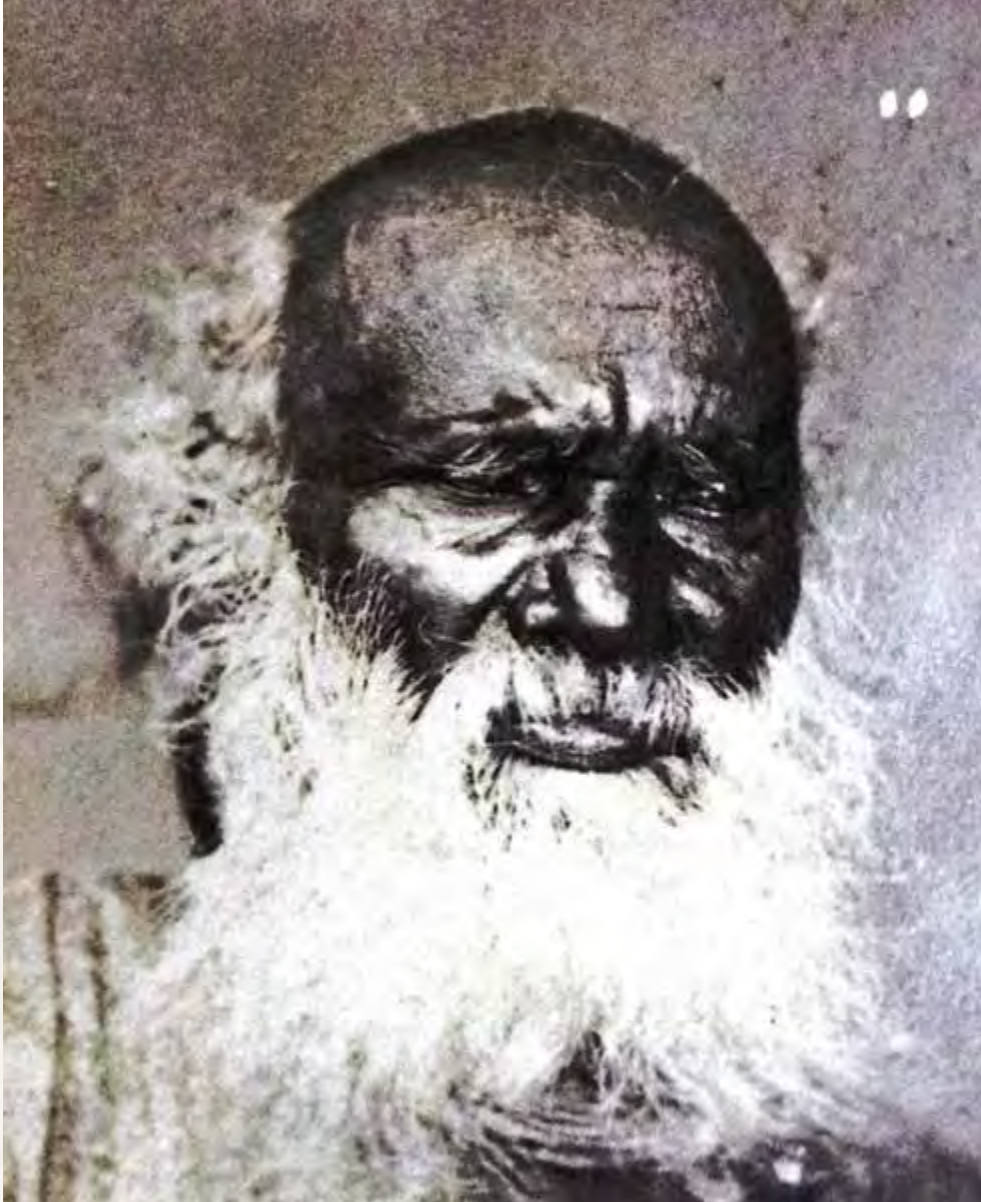


Fig 51. Immigrant Coulapa Rungapen arrived in Mauritius in 1835 at the age of 41.

He was photographed at the age of 89 at the Immigration Depot in 1883. Coulapa was a well-known vagrant in Mauritius between the 1860s and 1880s.

On several occasions, he was imprisoned at the Vagrant Depot of Grand River North West. He passed away in 1886 at the age of 92.

MGIII/PG, PE, and PH Series

Name of the Immigrant			Name of the Father or Mother of the Immigrant			Children		REMARKS
Deduct Employment						Boys	Girls	
Joseph	20	Labourer	Goendapundit					
Thyandaram	20		Chandran					
Allagberry	20		Serayannan					
Millet	20		Cholice					
Arum	20		Arumagan					
Madrades	20		Murthy					
Chenna	20		Chaitan					
Spondarum	20		Sundaram					
Ganarung	20		Randappa					
Chokery	20		Uthra					
Waran	20		Serayannan					
Allaghu	20		Sarvan					
Chakran	20		Munthayyan					
Munthayyan	20		Munthayyan					

Capt. W. D. Cook, arrived on board the *Lord Goderich* from Madras in February 1844  
 CHILDREN, LANDED ON THE *Lord Goderich* on February 1844

Remarks: Approved to Madras for study Mr. Donald on the 20th July 1844  
 Died in Oct 1844 aged 20. Name: M. S. Pandey. Died at 20  
 Died in June 1844 at Madras  
 Died in July 1844. Name: Pandey. Died at 20  
 Died in April 1844. Name: Pandey. Died at 20  
 Died in July 1844. Name: Pandey. Died at 20

Fig 52. Tamil and other South Indian indentured immigrants who arrived on board the *Lord Goderich* from Madras in February 1844.

MGIII/PE Series

We the undersigned Immigrants from Madras to Mauritius hereby engage to serve Mr V. Harel as labourers on the estate of \_\_\_\_\_ in the District of Pamplemousses for full period of Three years from the date of registration of this Contract in Mauritius with double the time of any unlicensed absences in consideration of Our receiving the wages and allowances following, viz.

10 Shilling per month for the 1<sup>st</sup> year  
 11 do do do 2<sup>d</sup> do  
 12 do do do 3<sup>d</sup> do

Provisions according to the Government scale dated 3<sup>d</sup> February 1859

Proper lodging and Medical care to be also provided to us  
 And we further engage at the expiry of this Contract to enter into new Contracts of Service, one or more, either with the above named or with other persons to be agreed upon hereafter until we shall have completed the full period of 5 years industrial residence in Mauritius with double the time of any unlicensed absences.

Name	Father Name.	Name.	Father Name
Pungascurry	+ Cyddingum	Thanaodee	+ Parnos
Sookrasen	+ Soapen	Sundanum	+ Parnascurry
Pylusum	+ Nygaper	Venatachelum	+ Do
Papaputhu	+ Nauremoator	Cyddingum	+ Thopay
Matorscurry	+ Cyahpoore	Venatachelum	+ Adpoy
Columdavelis	+ Thondroyen	Gouriden	+ Adakalum
Kadargen	+ Cyahpoore	Venatachelum	+ Parnascurry
Veeramoator	+ Aharos		
Maurisipen	+ Soopramamen		
Leathan	+ Veeraper		

Fig 53. A three-year Indentured Labour Contract Agreement between Mr. V. Harel, a Franco-Mauritian estate owner, and 17 Tamil indentured labourers was signed on 3rd February 1859 at the Immigration Depot, before Mr. Thomy Hugon, the then Protector of Immigrants.

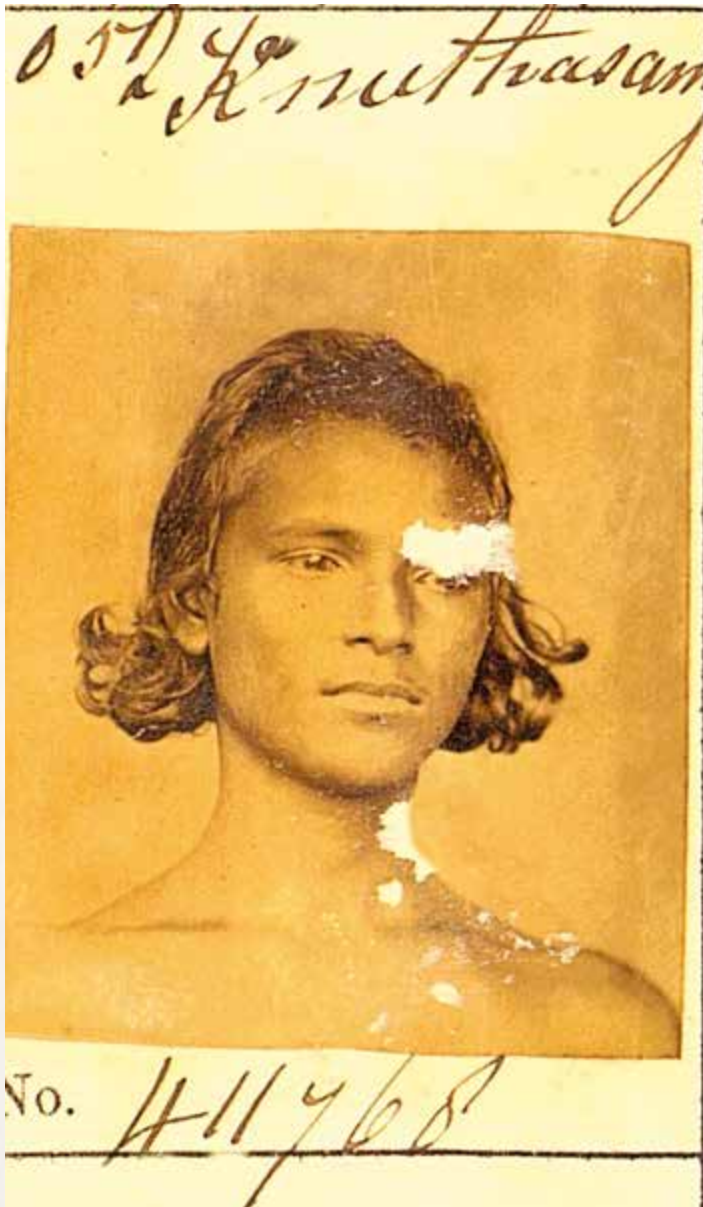


Fig 54. Immigrant Kunthasawmy arrived in Mauritius from the port of Madras in 1894 at the age of 22.

He was from the village of Athoor located on the outskirts of the city of Madras in southern India.

At first, he worked as a labourer at Victoria sugar estate and later on, at Constance sugar estate as a cook. During the 1920s and the 1930s, a self-employed individual in Pamplemousses district.

He was photographed upon his arrival at the Immigration Depot. He passed away at the age of 65 in 1937 in Pamplemousses.

*MGIIIA/PG & PE Series/Courtesy of Mr. M. S. Kunthasami*

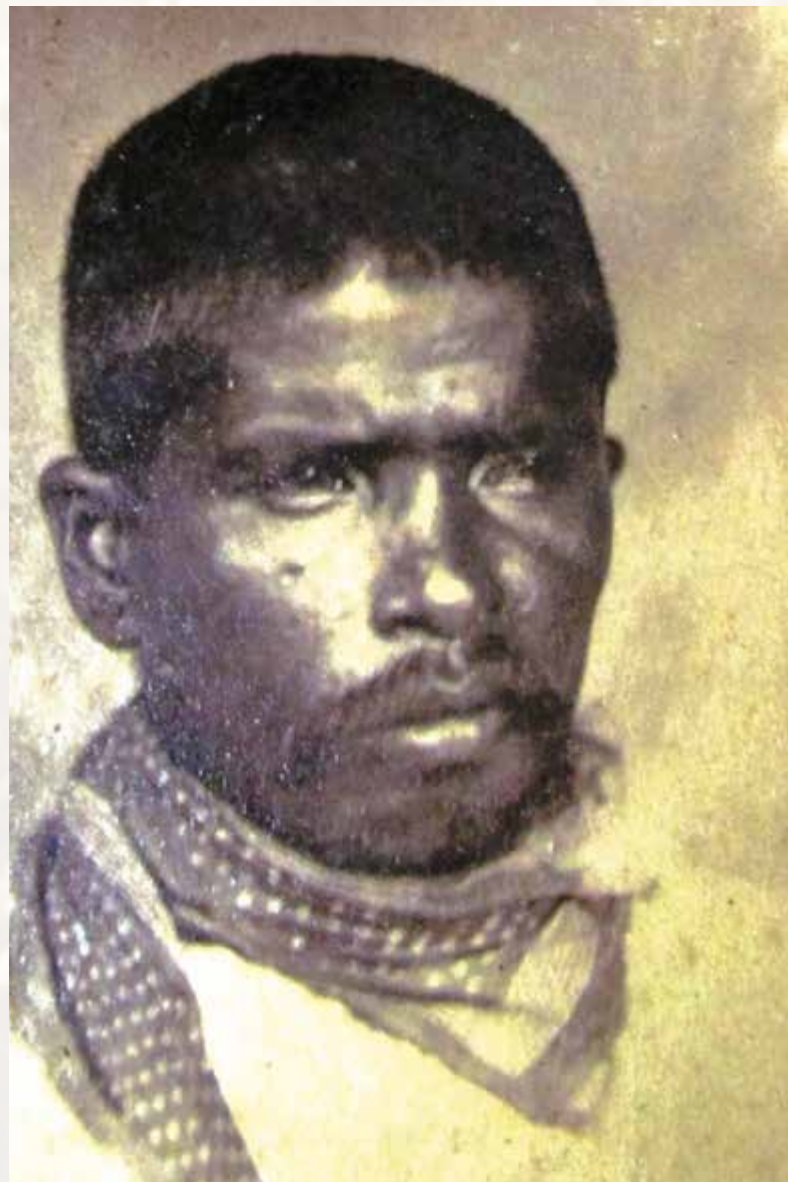


Fig 55. Munisami was photographed as an 'incurable vagrant' in 1903 at the Immigration Depot for the second time. He was then 33 years old. He was deported in 1905 by the local British colonial authorities at the age of 35.

He was the one of the most notorious vagrants in Mauritius between the 1885 and 1905 with 13 convictions in over a 20-year period.

*MGIIIA/PG Series, PE and PH Series*

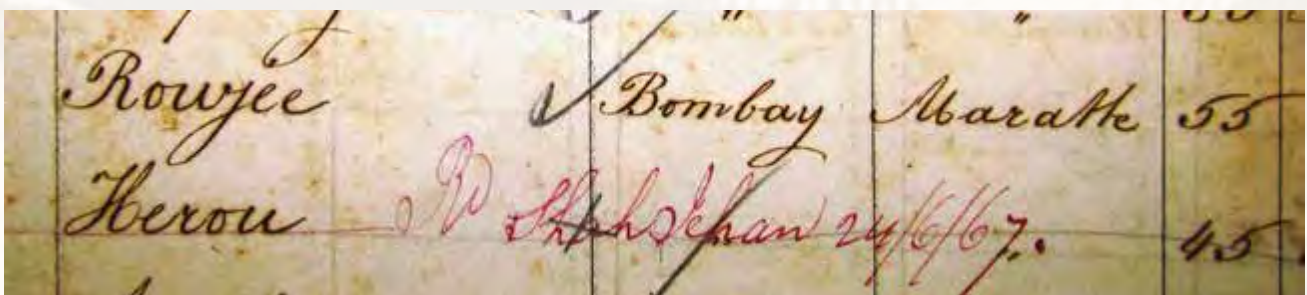
## The Marathi Immigrants in Mauritius

Between 1826 and 1910, an estimated 10% of all the Indian indentured workers or around 45,207 men, women, and children arrived in Mauritius from the Bombay Presidency and neighbouring regions. At that time, they were called 'Maratta', although some of them were from present-day Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Marathi immigrants and their descendants settled in different parts of Mauritius, namely in the districts of Black River, Plaines Wilhems, Savanne, Moka, Grand Port and Flacq.



**Fig 56. The Main Regions and Districts of recruitment of Marathi indentured labourers in Western India in the 19th century.**

*MGI, Labour Immigrants in British Mauritius: A Pictorial Recollection, 2001*



**Fig 57. Immigrants Rowjee and Herou arrived in Mauritius on the Sarah in August 1834.**

*MGIII/PE Series /  
MNA/RA Series*

21 courants, ...  
 bray et 2 marins.  
 1er. Aout. — Brick Sarah, cap. M. Cay, de Bombay, le 5 Juillet  
 sur son lest. Passagers : 29 cultivateurs indiens, un apprenti du  
 Gouvernement et un enfant, un Européen et 41 convicts.  
 ... de Calcutta le 22 Mai.

Fig 58. Extract from *Le Mauricien* announcing the arrival of the brick the Sarah on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1834 with 29 Indian indentured workers, 1 Black Government Apprentice and 41 Indian convicts.

NL, *Le Mauricien* 6 août 1834

Immigrants Rowjee and Herou were among the first Marathi immigrants to set foot on Mauritian soil in August 1834. They arrived on board the Sarah along with 29 indentured workers. Rowjee was 55 years old and was engaged to work on a five-year contract for Mr. Bickajee, an Indian Parsi settled in Mauritius. Herou was 45 years old and came to work for the same employer and returned to India in 1867 at the age of 78. Between 1834 and 1838, a total of 272 Marathi immigrants arrived in Mauritius on four ships from Bombay. On 12th August 1838, the Lavinia brought around 155 men mostly adult male Marathi labourers to work on the Mauritian sugar estates. During this early period of indentured immigration, only eleven Marathi women and five children landed in Port Louis.

53. Ship. Mertoun from Bombay

Nominal List OF IMMIGRANTS, CONSISTING OF 285 MEN, 11 WOMEN

Name of the Immigrant.	Age.	Former Employment.	Name of the Father or Mother of Immigrant.
Archoo...	18	Labourer	Gissanath
...	27	d	Gopalsurao
...	26	d	...
...	25	d	Goparao
...	18	Staylor	...
...	12	Servant	...
...	12	Labourer	...
...	20	852 d	...

Fig 59. Extract of the Mertoun showing the arrival of Marathi Indentured Workers in 1843.

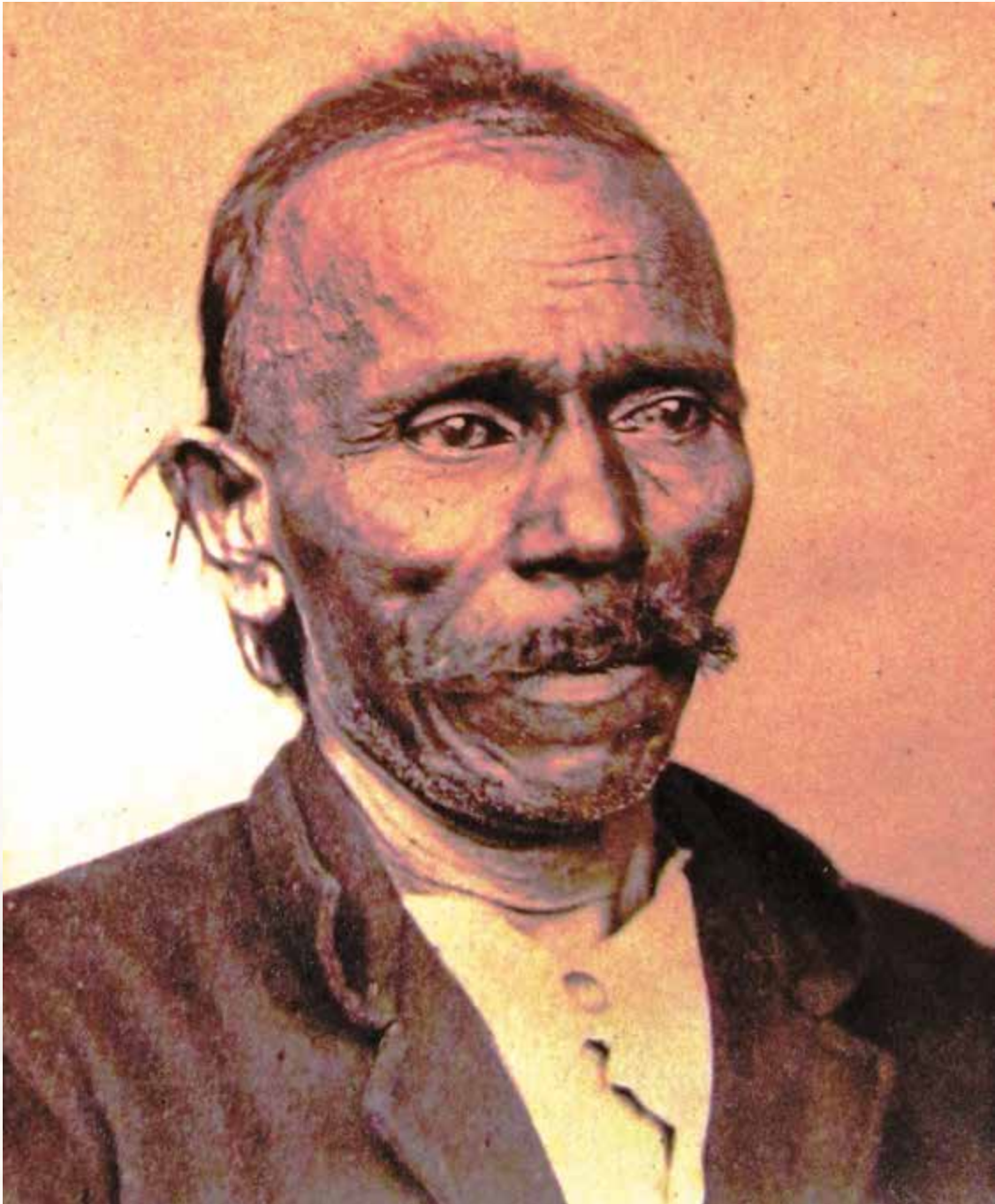
MGIIIA/PE Series

NAME OF IMMIGRANT.	Age.
Bhagoo	26
Babajee	25
Ramma	15
Babajee	20
Babajee	35
Jotee	35
Pardoo	20

Fig 60. Immigrants Bhagoo, Babajee, and several other Marathis who arrived in Mauritius from Bombay in 1859.

MGIIIA/PE Series

On 15th June 1843, the Mertoun arrived in Port Louis harbour from Bombay. The majority of the 289 passengers including four women, were classified as being Maratta. They were sent to work on sugar estates located in different parts of the island. The following month, the Ward Chipman arrived with another batch of Marathi immigrants. The arrival of the Mertoun and Ward Chipman was a landmark in the history of the migration of thousands of Marathi indentured workers to Mauritius.



**Fig 61. Immigrant Ramjee, a Marathi, arrived in Mauritius from Bombay in 1843 when he was 20 years old He was photographed at the age of 64 at the Immigration Depot in 1887.**

*MGIII/PG and PE Series*



**Fig 62. Immigrant Soobana, another young Marathi, arrived from Bombay in 1843 at the age of 18. He was photographed in 1890 at the age of 65 at the Immigration Depot.**

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series*



**Fig 63. Immigrant Gunpath arrived in Mauritius at the age of 30 from Bombay in 1864. He was photographed in 1874 at the Immigration Depot at the age of 40.**

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series*



Fig 64. Immigrant Raggoo was 20 years old when he arrived in Mauritius from Bombay in 1865. He was photographed in 1875 at the Immigration Depot at the age of 30.

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series*

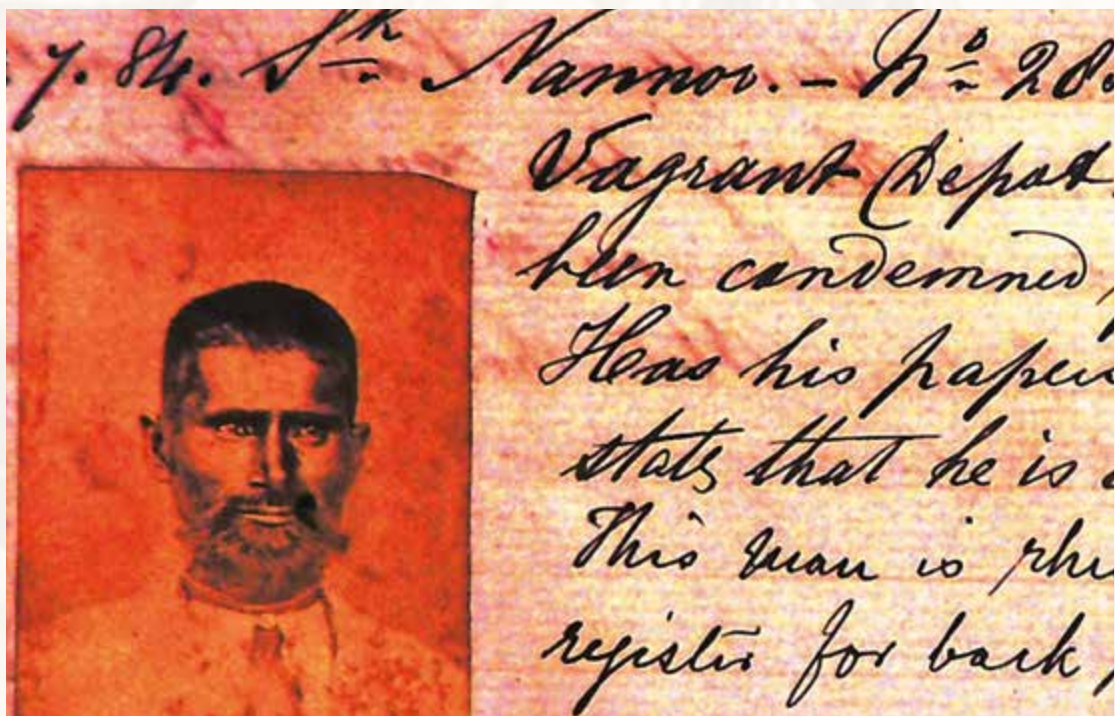


Fig 65. Immigrant Sheikh Nannor, a Muslim from Thana district in present-day Maharashtra, was 26 years old when he arrived from Bombay in 1861. He was photographed as a vagrant at the age of 49 at the Immigration Depot in 1884. He was sent to the Vagrant Depot of Grand River to serve his sentence. Four years later, he returned to Bombay, after the Protector of Immigrants gave him a free passage back home.

*MGIIIA/PE and PH Series*

## The Telugu Immigrants in Mauritius

It is estimated that 7% of all the Indian indentured workers who arrived in Mauritius between 1834 and 1910, originated from the Telugu-speaking districts in South India. Approximately around 31,644 Telugu and other South Indian immigrants who landed in Mauritius transited through the port city of Madras and some through the minor ports of Coringa, Cuddalore and Pondicherry. The Telugu immigrants were often called ‘Telingas’ or ‘Talingas’ or ‘Coringas’



**Fig 66. The Main Regions and Districts of recruitment for Telugu indentured labourers in Southern India in the 19th century.**

*Courtesy of Dr. Indrani Gopauloo, Free-Lance Researcher*



According to archival records the first Telugu immigrants in Mauritius were Kistam, Venglepati and Apaya who reached Port Louis from the Madras Presidency in 1835. The first large batch of Telugu immigrants to arrive in Mauritius was in June 1837 when the Lord Elphinstone arrived with 249 adult male immigrants from the port town of Coringa then forming part of the Madras Presidency.

Fig 67. Immigrant Nursoo arrived in Mauritius in 1838 from the port of Coringa. He was 35 years old.

Nursoo was photographed at the age of 88 at the Immigration Depot in 1891. He died in 1895 at the age of 92.

MGIIIA/PG and PE Series & Mr. V. Nursoo

Mootoo Curpen	Al: 125256-1	62-27-7-91	30
Nursoo	X	"	35

Fig 68. A Ship Arrival Register showing the arrival of Immigrant Nursoo in 1838.

MGIIIA/PE Series - Courtesy of K. Curpen and V. Nursoo

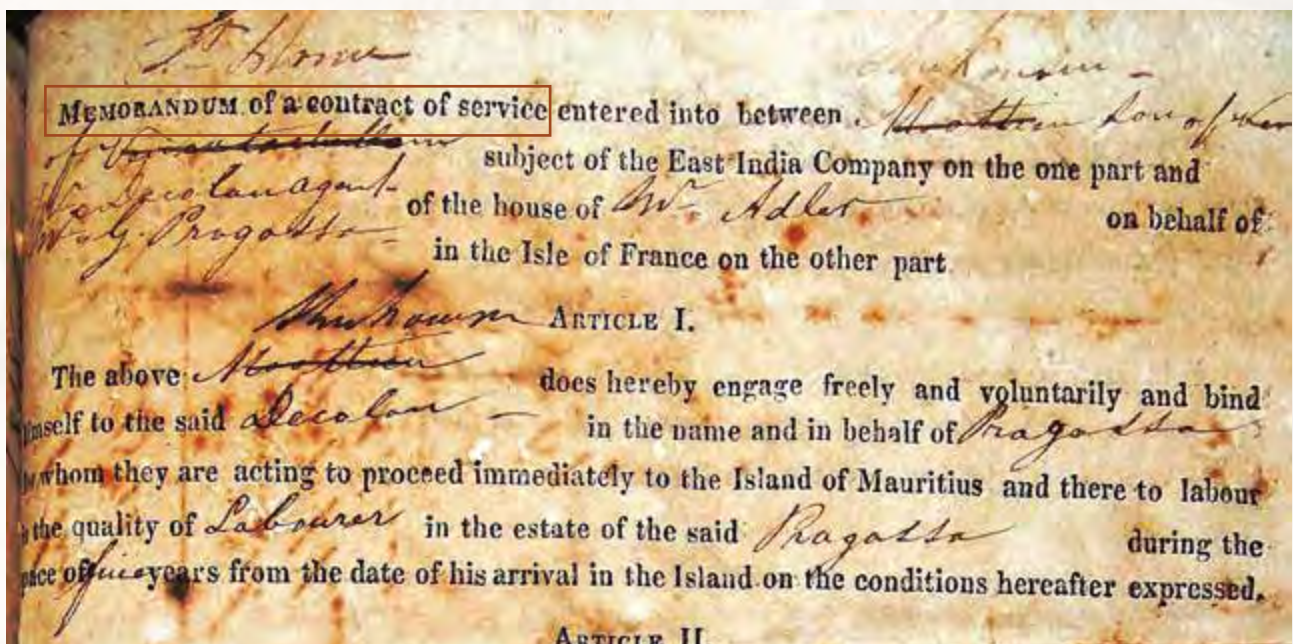


Fig 69. Immigrant Shaikoussen, a Muslim from Pondicherry, was originally from Chittoor in present-day Andhra State. He signed an Indentured Labour Contract for five years in October 1838 in the port-city of Cuddalore in South India with a commercial agent of Germain Pragassa, a free coloured small estate owner in Mauritius.

Name	Father's Name	Place of Nativity
Sunasse	Sunasse	Vizagapatnam
Uplamah	Upliah	do
Gorapah	Sunasse	do
Rishnamah	Upliah	do
Murdar	Moonie	Tanjore

Fig 70. The ship register showing the arrival of Telugu indentured immigrants, such as Sunasse, from Vizagapatnam in southern India to Mauritius in 1863.

MGIIIA/PE Series

A significant number of the Telugu immigrants went to work and live in the districts of Rivière du Rempart, Pamplemousses, Flacq, Grand Port, Savanne, Moka and Black River. In the 1870s, several Telugu immigrant children arrived in Mauritius. They worked and lived on the sugar estates and had to take care of themselves such as Immigrant Ramanah and Chelligadoo.

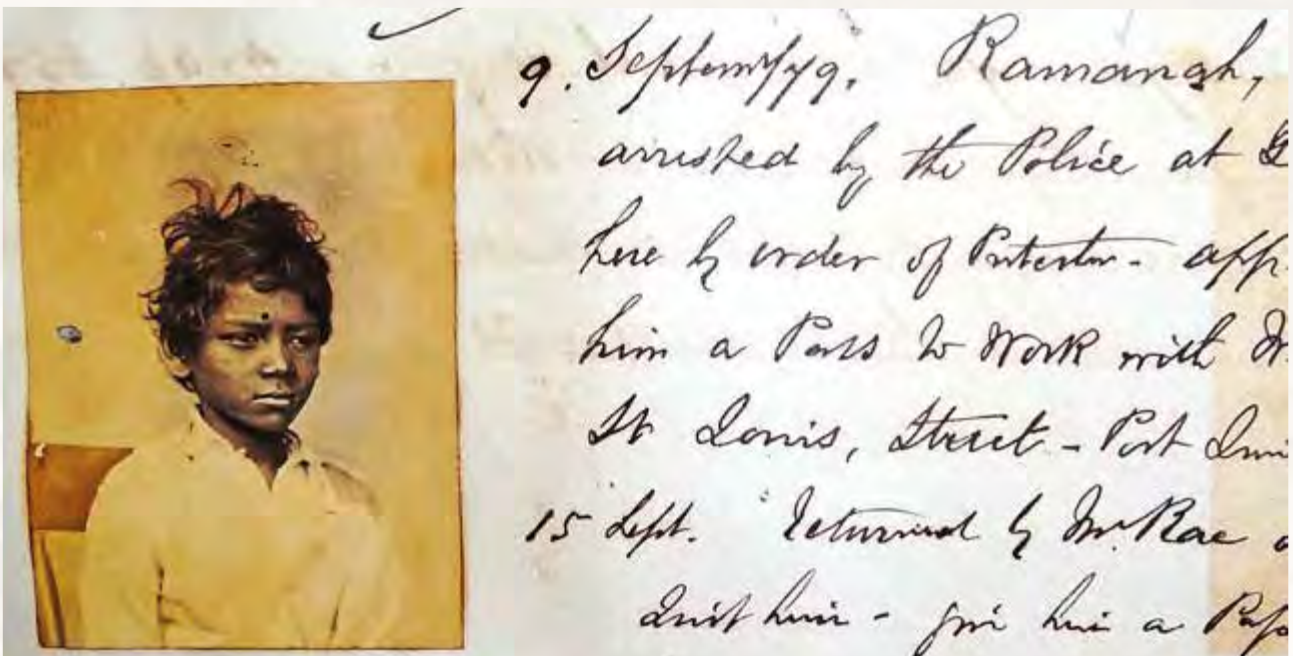


Fig 71. Immigrant Ramanah, a Telugu, arrived in Mauritius as a young child with his parents from Madras in 1872. His parents died shortly after. In 1879, he was arrested as a 12 year old child vagrant in Port Louis and was imprisoned at the Vagrant Depot.

MGIIIA/PE and PH Series

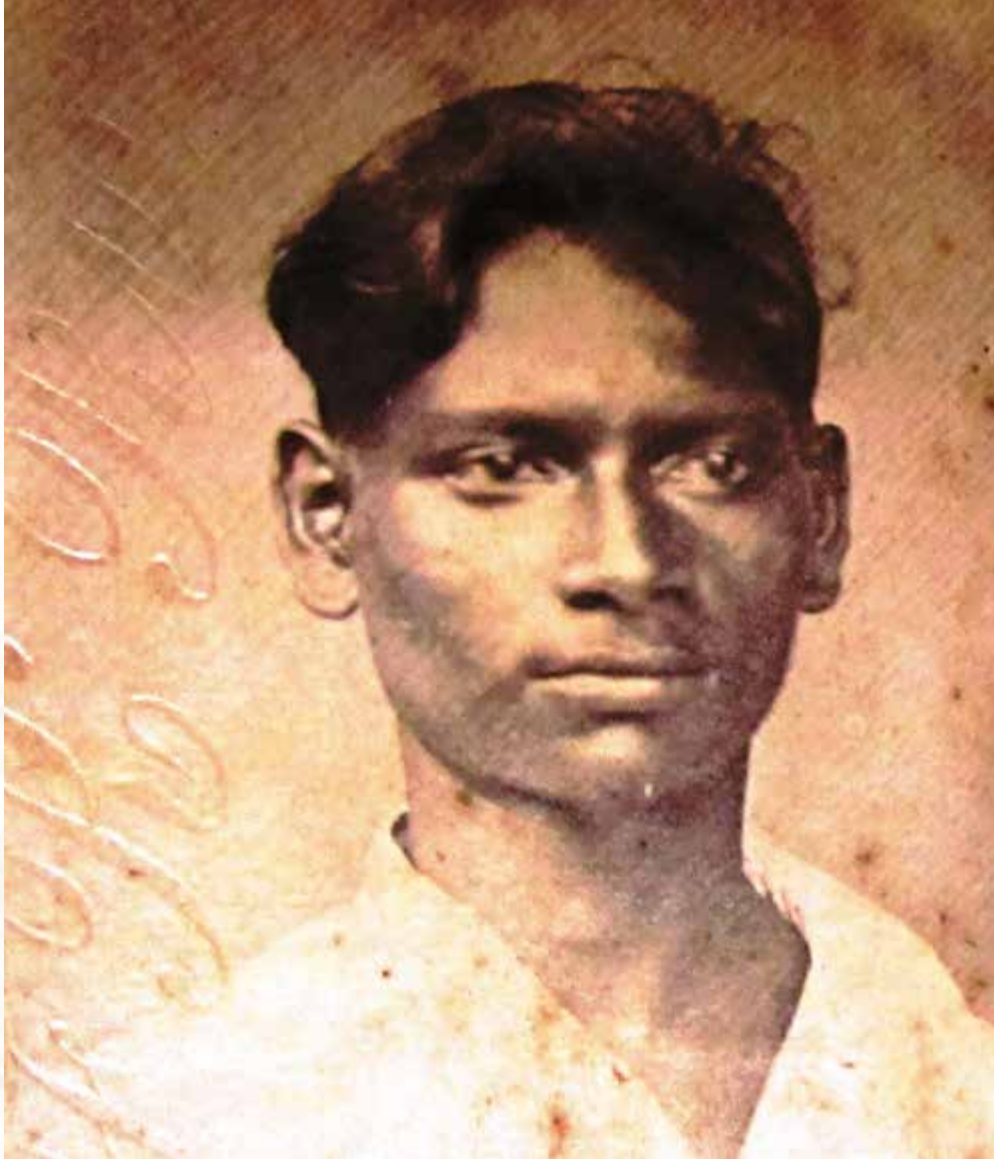


Fig 72. Ramanah was 25 years old when he was photographed in 1892 at the Immigration Depot. On that occasion, he went to obtain his Old Immigrant Ticket. Ramanah worked as a labourer on Mon Loisir sugar estate near the village of Rempart.

These two immigrant pictures of Ramanah, just like the archival pictures of Immigrant Joggessur, bear testimony to the rich, vast, and unique photo archival collection concerning the indentured workers in Mauritius.

*MGIIIA/PG Series & PE Series*

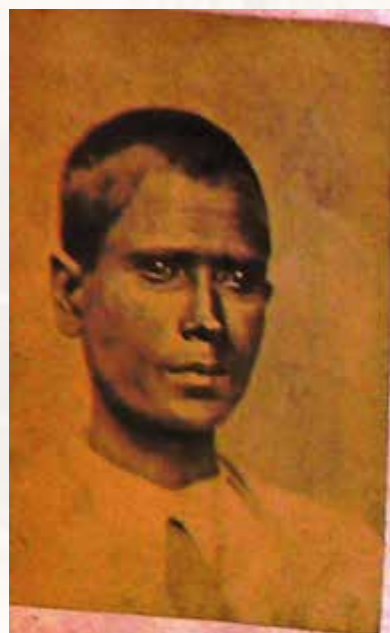
Fig 73. Immigrant Chelligadoo, a Telugu teenager, arrived in Mauritius in the 1874.

Initially, he was employed as a labourer in the district of Rivière du Rempart.

He was arrested on several occasions as a vagrant. In 1877, he was photographed at the Immigration Depot as an

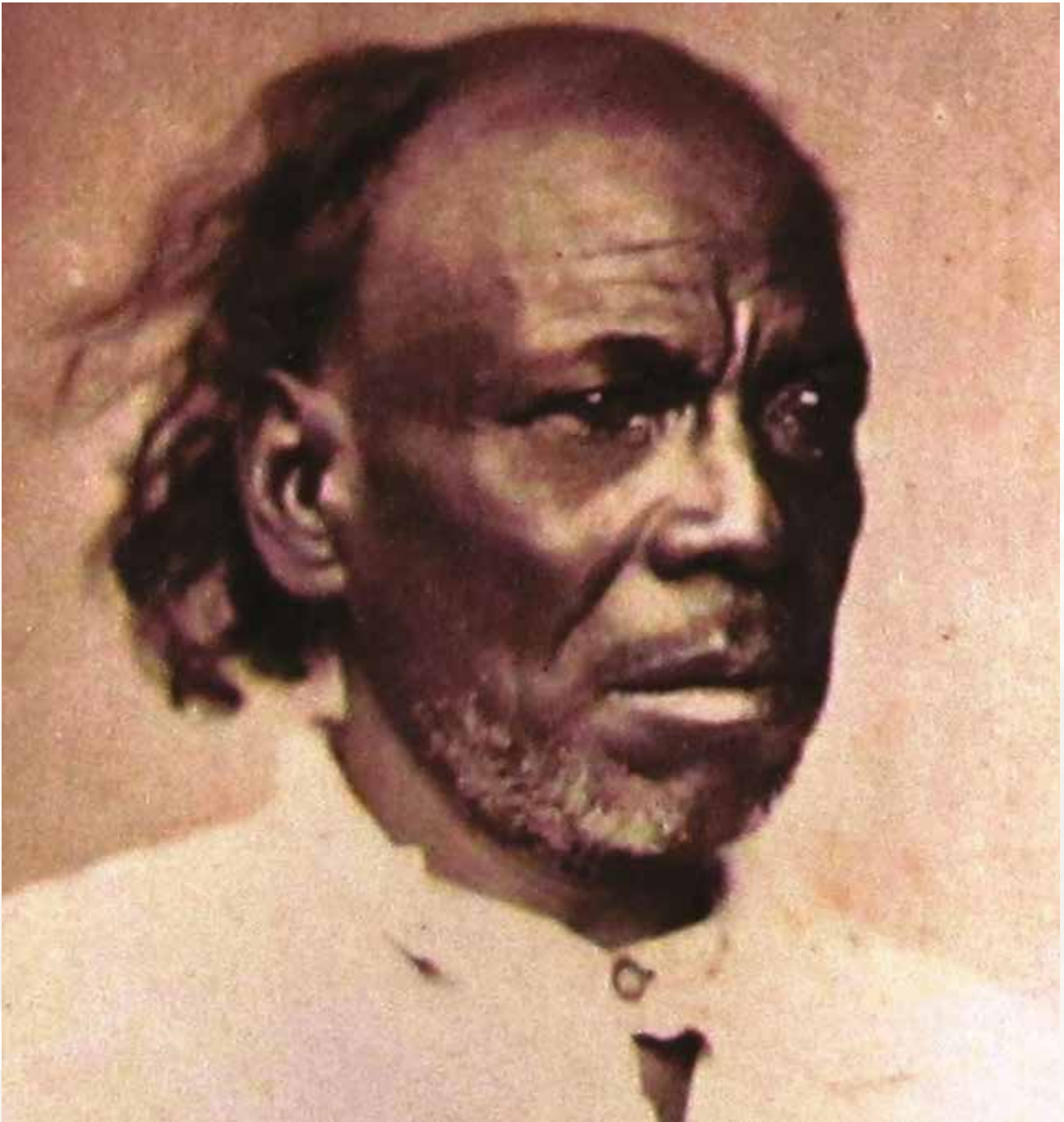
“incorrigible vagrant” at the young age of 27. He was imprisoned on several occasions at the Vagrant Depot.

*MGIIIA/PE and PH Series*



Chelligadoo.  
 Narraidoos. -  
 on the 29. 8. 8/  
 sentenced on the  
 -prisonment for  
 Magistrate of the  
 with the Manag  
 Rivière du Remp

## The Tribal or Adivasis Indentured Labourers



**Fig 74. Immigrant Bussia reached Mauritius in 1836 from Madras at the age of 32. He was a tribal from a village near the city of Madurai in present-day Tamil Nadu. He was photographed at the age of 75 at the Immigration Depot in 1879.**

*MGIIIA/PG Series/PE Series*

Between 1834 and 1843, thousands of tribals or adivasies were recruited as contractual workers to work in Mauritius. Geoghegan, a senior British colonial official, explained that from 1834 to 1870 “the so-called adivasies, or hill coolies [were] being much sought after.” However, in the late 1850s and 1860s, the demand for the labour of tribals from north east India changed as “*the proportion of tribals in overseas migration had declined as a result of heavy mortality*”.

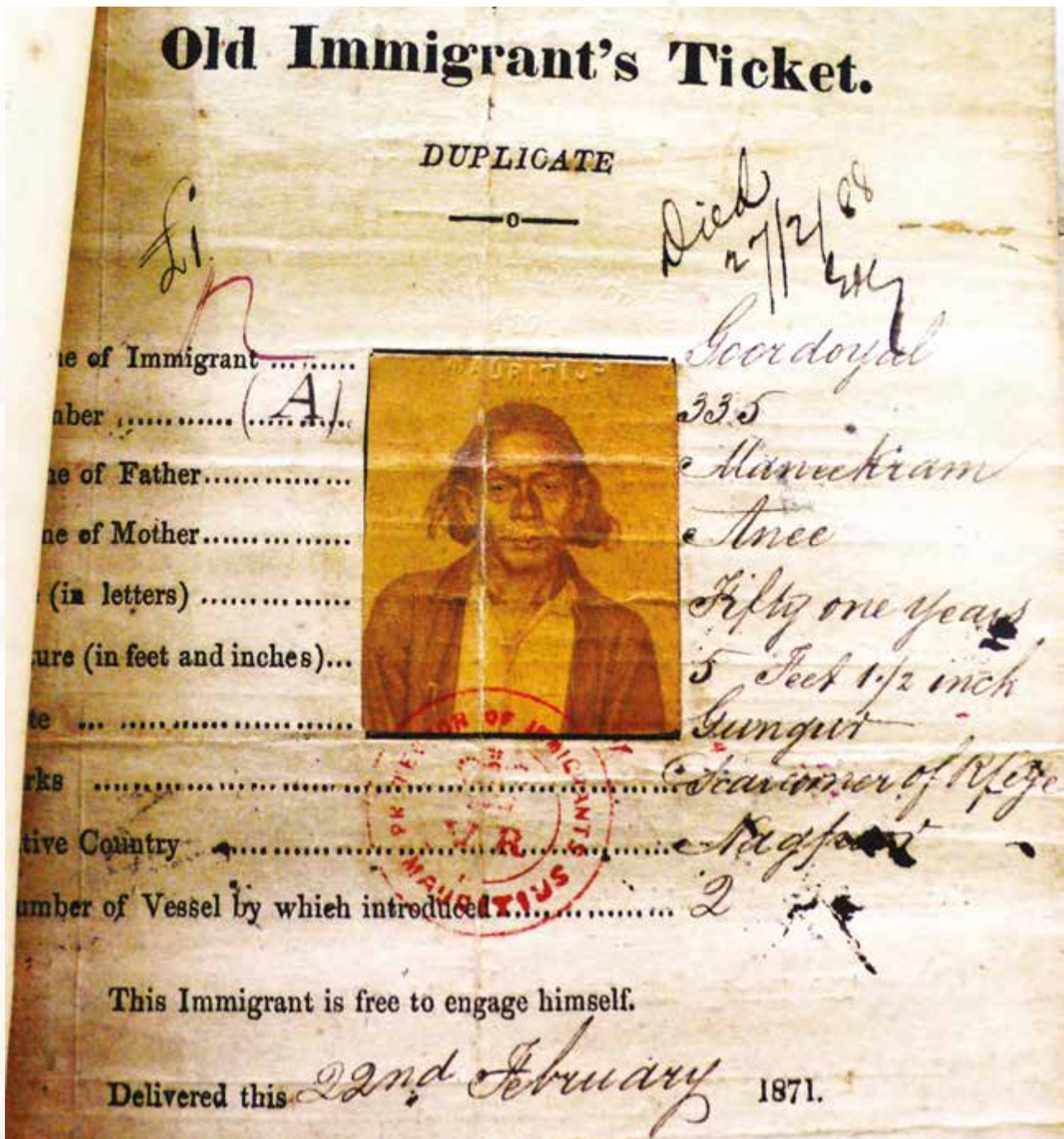


Fig 75. Immigrant Goordoyal who an Oraon from the Chota Nagpur region of Bihar, arrived in Mauritius in 1843 from Calcutta at the age of 24. He was a well known Indian vagrant.

Goordoyal obtained a duplicate copy of his Old Immigrant Ticket on 22nd February 1871 which cost him one pound sterling or equivalent to two to three months' salary.

Mr. H.N.D. Beyts, the Protector of Immigrants, observed that: "This Immigrant is free to engage himself".

MNA/PB Series

**Fig 76. Ship Arrival List of Immigrants from Calcutta in 1843 shows numerous Tribals travelling along with other indentured labourers. They were led by Sirdar Gopal who was from Bihar.**  
*MGIIIA/PE Series*

Chunroo	31
Fulkingun	25
Bostahidaf	31
Hitzkissu	18
Bawdelsing	27
Uchoodaf	22
Kunaye	30
Sahab	20
Boitheo	18
Umoop	25
Gopal	24
Birlall	30
Kunoo	30
Fulchand	16
Boodhun	20
Gyanchand	22
Shoree Dey at Plain	25
Devinahomee	22
Moyputsing	24
Ackjah	16
Bolvancee	32
Gopal	28
Kuridas	30

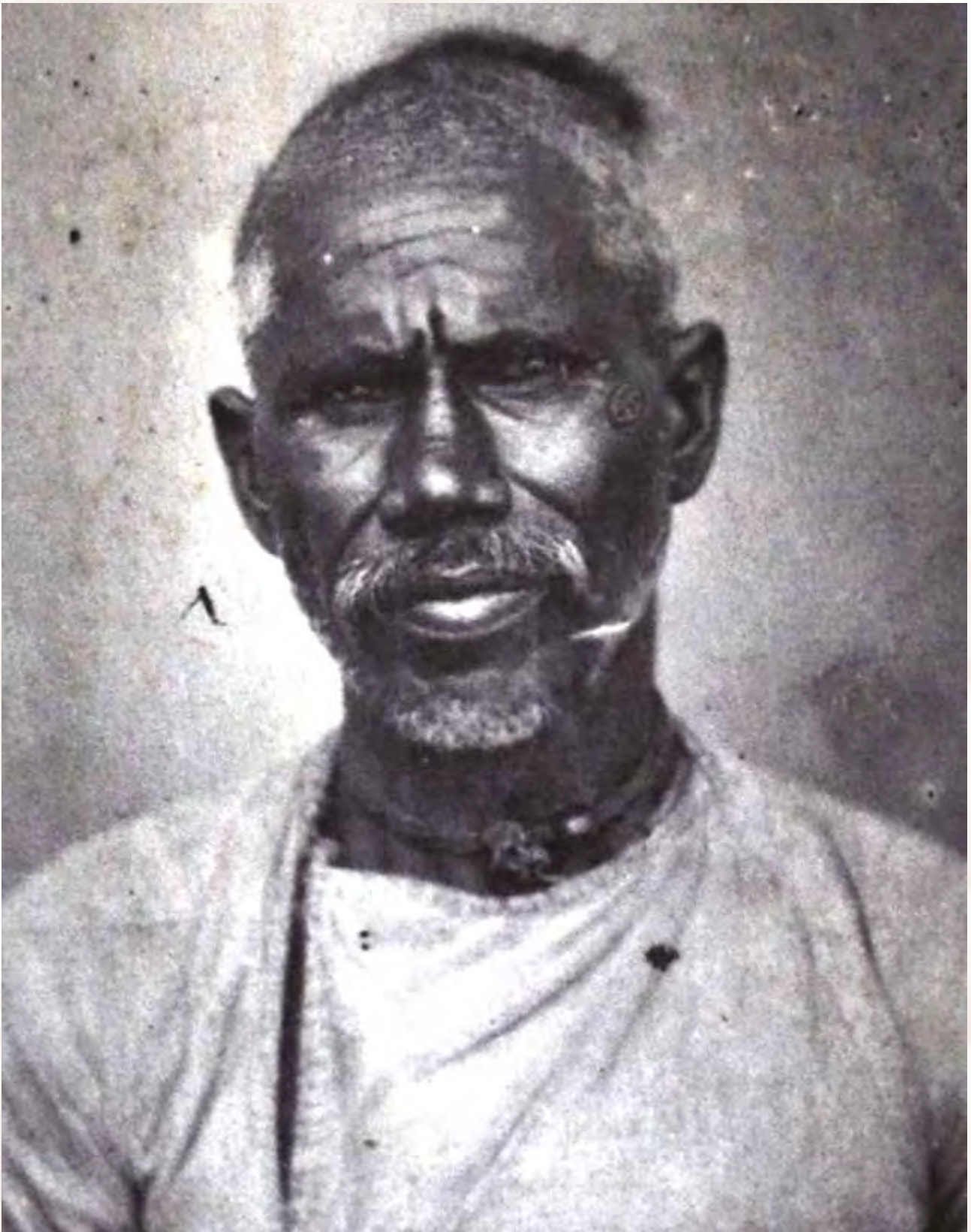
Indian workers, known as tribals or adivasies, are estimated at around 63,289 or 14% of the total number of indentured labourers introduced in to this small Indian Ocean island between 1826 and 1910<sup>1</sup>. They came mostly from the Chota Nagpur, Ranchi, Hazaribagh, and Ramghur districts of Bihar and present-day Jharkhand, and some from Uttar Pradesh and Bengal with thousands of others originating from the Tamil, Telugu, and Orissa regions of southern India such as Immigrant Bussia (See Fig. 74). Between the 1830s and the early 1900s, there are hundreds of Indian tribals who achieved some measure of social and economic mobility. This can clearly be seen in the interesting life-story of Immigrant Gopal.





**Fig 77. Immigrant Gopal reached Mauritius in 1843 from Madras at the age of 24 as a sirdar. He was an Oraon or a tribal from Ranchi district in Jharkand state. In 1833 at the age of 14, he left his native village to go and work in Calcutta and then in Madras. He went to work on Trianon Sugar Estate. By the 1850s and 1860s, Gopal became a job contractor and small landowner and cultivator. He was arrested as a vagrant and imprisoned at the Vagrant Depot on 6 January 1868. He was photographed when he was 71 years old at the Immigration Depot in 1890. On 30 August 1892, he passed away at the age of 73 at the village of Moka.**

*MGIIIA/PG, PE, PF, & PH Series*



**Fig 78. Immigrant Seechurn reached Mauritius in 1839 from Calcutta at the age of 30. He was a dhangar from the district of Balliah in present-day Uttar Pradesh. He worked as a labourer on Britannia sugar estate in Savanne district. During the 1850s and 1860s, he became a labour overseer and sirdar on the aforementioned estate. He was photographed when he was 56 years old at the Immigration Depot in 1865. A decade later, he passed away at the age of 66 at Chemin Grenier village in Savanne district.**

*MGIIIA/PG, PE, and PF Series*

# Part 2

## The Experiences of the Female and Children Immigrants

### The Poem of the 'Unknown Immigrant'

(In English and Hindi)

By Shri Abhimanyu Unnuth, Well Known Mauritian Poet  
And Writer and a Descendant of Indentured Labourers

“Seen suddenly  
In gusty winds  
The petals of Gulmohar  
Falling in abundance  
Weltering, fluttering in solitude,  
On blazing embers  
That unknown immigrant.

It flashed back on me  
The unwritten history  
Those heavens hidden in cinder of history  
Arose in memory

I listened to them again and again  
Mudiya Pahad, (the Govardhan of Pitris)  
- the sentinel feared the rains  
Of soaked lashes  
Horrorified he  
Shivered in silence again and again  
That unknown immigrant

The quiescence when cried  
From sugarcane fields  
I remembered the vermillion on foreheads

The shining drops of sweat on bare chests  
Their tender dreams  
Tender like petals red  
Turned into ash  
Burnt in heat of scorching sun  
That unknown immigrant.

After listening to the sounds of Ganga  
Coming floating on waves of Indian ocean  
I remembered, that dark history  
Forgotten  
The dark history hadn't seen  
The unknown immigrant  
Nor the mute history told his full story ever  
That unknown immigrant  
The deaf history never heard to  
His cries

Who shed the first drop  
Of sweat on this soil  
Who sprouted the greens  
In rocky surroundings  
Bearing the marks of thousands canes  
Shedding the red sweat again and again  
That first Girmitiya  
The son of this soil  
Yours and mine too  
Mine and yours too  
Unknown immigrant...”

“अचानक हवा के झोंकों से झरझरा कर झरते देखा  
गुलमोहर की पंखुड़ियों को  
खामोशी में, झुलसते, छटपटाते देखा  
उन्हें धरती पर धधक रहे अंगारों पर  
वह अनजान आप्रवासी

याद आया मुझे  
वह अनलखिा इतहास  
इतहास की राख में छुपी वे आहें  
याद आ गयी  
जनिहें सुना बार-बार  
प्रहरी मुड़िया पहाड़  
डरता था वह भीगे कोड़ों की बौछारों से  
दहलकर बार-बार काँपा मौन साथे  
वह अनजान आप्रवासी

गनने के खेतों से खामोशी चीत्कारती जब  
हरयिली बीच तपती दोपहरी में  
याद आये मजदूरों के माथे के टीके  
नंगी छाती पर पसीने की चमकती बूँदें  
धधकते सूरज के ताप से  
लाल पंखुड़ियों से  
उनके कोमल कोमल  
सपने हुए राख  
वह अनजान आप्रवासी

हृदि महासागर की लहरों से तैर कर आयी  
गंगा की स्वर-लहरी को सुन  
याद आया मुझे, वह काला इतहास  
उसका बसिरा हुआ  
अंधे इतहास ने उस अनजान आप्रवासी को न देखा था  
न तो गूँगे इतहास ने कभी सुनाई उसकी पूरी कहानी  
वह अनजान आप्रवासी

बहरे इतहास न सुन पाया  
उसके चीत्कारों को  
जसिकी इस माटी पर बही

पहली बूँद पसीने की  
जसिने चट्टानों के बीच हरयिली उगायी थी  
नंगी पीठों पर सह कर लाखों बाँसों की बौछारें  
बहा-बहाकर लाल पसीना  
वह पहला गरिमटिया  
इस माटी का बेटा  
तेरा अपना, मेरा भी अपना

मेरा अपना, तेरा भी अपना  
अनजान आप्रवासी, अनजान आप्रवासी ...”

(The inspiring words of this poem are carved on one of the bronze artworks which is located at  
the Aapravasi World Heritage Site/The poem was reproduced with the permission of the Unnuth family)



*“Thus over the course of the 19th century, the immigration of Indian women to Mauritius was transformed from a labour migration into a colonization programme. Indentured labourers instituted their own forms of family settlement....*

*The struggles of Indian women in Mauritius demonstrate above all the capacity of relatively powerless female immigrants to initiate change and to react to injustice....The non-engaged female population was by such means “engaged” to the men with whom they formed an attachment.*

*However, it would be wrong to suggest that Indian family relationships were governed by state initiatives. The socio-cultural lives of immigrants lay largely outside the official domain or understandings...*

*As more evidence of the complexity and diversity of women’s roles in indentured migration is collected, the bias and incompleteness of such assumptions and generalisations will be increasingly recognized and rectified. It is hoped that this book has made a start in that direction by reflecting the rich and important contribution that the first generation of Indian women in Mauritius made to the settlement and development of the communities to which they belonged and to the history of the island in general.”*

*-Dr. Marina Carter  
International Historian of Indenture and Migration Studies  
Laskshmi’s Legacy: The Testimonies of Indian Women  
in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Mauritius*

# Chapter One

## A Profile of the Female Immigrant Labourers

An estimated 106,500 female immigrants, or nearly 25% of all the indentured workers, who emigrated to Mauritius between 1826 and 1910, were women and girls between the ages of 1 and 60 <sup>1</sup>. Between 1829 and 1834, a few female Indian came to work in Mauritius mostly as domestic servants and ‘ayas’ or baby-sitters. For instance, Immigrant Josepha, a 15-year old Christian Indian work, who was engaged on behalf of Bolger family by Captain Langlois in Pondicherry, was employed as a domestic servant on a two-year contract.

*Continued* *Langlois* N° 255 *continued* *Langlois*  
**REPORT of Passengers on (the Ship *June. Laure* Captain *Langlois* arrived,**  
*Tranquebar* the *8<sup>th</sup> October 1829.*

Names, Age, Profession or Trade.	Passports, by what Authority signed and for what destination originally granted.	Motives of the voyage, if destined of temporary or permanent residence in the Colony.	Recommendations with names of Persons willing to become security for good conduct, &c.	Profession in the Colony or profession
<i>Indian Domestic</i>				
<i>Enock 20.</i>	<i>None.</i>	<i>To serve in the family of Mr. Bolger.</i>		
<i>Abraham - 15.</i>	<i>Articles of Agreement.</i>	<i>Were engaged by Mr. Langlois at Pondicherry, for the service of divers individuals in this Colony.</i>		
<i>Adolphe - 20.</i>				
<i>Soupraya - 21.</i>				
<i>Boxou - 28.</i>				
<i>Gregory - 25.</i>				
<i>Ramsamy 17.</i>				
<i>Josepha Ramale 15.</i>				

Fig 1. Josepha is one of the earliest recorded female indentured labourers in Mauritius. She was a Christian Indian from Pondicherry and was engaged as a domestic servant by Mr. Langlois on behalf of Mr. Bolger, for a period of two years in October 1829.

MNA/Z2B Series / MGIIIA/PF1

1. Estimated from MGIIIA, PE 1 to PE 161, Indentured Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers (1826 -1910); MNA, Z2D Series Volumes 1 to 188, Free Passengers and other Passengers Ship Arrival Registers (1826 - 1911).

Josepha and seven other male servants travelled to Mauritius on board the *Jeune Laure* and landed in Port Louis in October 1829. She was engaged “under articles of agreement” which were read to her. Her two-year contract was renewable. Mr. Bolger paid ten pounds sterling as security bond to secure her services.

TOTAL.			
M	W	B	G
75	—	—	—
1,160	61	22	11
3,619	174	20	10
6,873	321	66	32
11,523	221	44	20
931	102	2	—
107	9	—	—
480	33	19	10
69	8	4	2
24,837	929	177	85

Table 1: Figures showing the arrival of hundreds of Indian female immigrants between 1834 and 1842.

MNA/HA Series

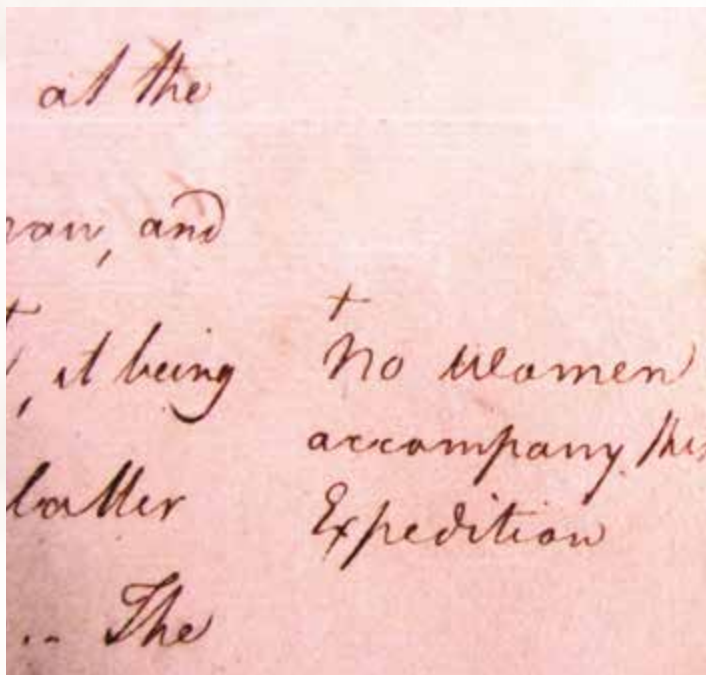


Fig 3. The margin notes of McFarlane, the Irish colonial Chief Magistrate of Calcutta, who approved the 1834 indenture contract of Arbuthnot. He observed that there were no women among the 36 Hill Coolies from Bihar, who sailed to Mauritius on 2nd November 1834 on board the *Atlas*

MNA/RA Series

Between 1834 and 1842, when the indenture labour system was a private enterprise, controlled and funded mainly by Franco-Mauritian and British planters and merchants, around 1,014 women and young girls arrived mostly as indentured workers from the Bengal, Madras and Bombay Presidencies. The female immigrants represented 3.9% of the total number of indentured immigrant arrivals.



Fig 4. Extract from Ship Arrival List of the *Herbert Taylor* showing the names of four female Indian indentured immigrants and four Indian children in January 1836

MGIIIA/PE Series

In June 1838, Immigrant Peearie, a Hindu of Bengali origin, and her child along with ten female Indian indentured workers and ten Indian children arrived in Mauritius. She was assigned immigrant number 10,702. Peearie and her fellow indentured workers were employed as labourers on Mr de Bissy's sugar estate at Plaisance. Seven years later. On 15th July 1845, Peearie and her child returned to Calcutta like most of her fellow female immigrants and their children. However, in 1849, she came back to work as a domestic servant under contract for Mr de Bissy on Mon Repos Sugar Estate in Plaines Wilhems. She passed away in the same district on 12th December 1883 at the age of 90.

Women	
Mangaree & 2 children	Emb: 15/7/45
Bonmah	Emb: 15/7/44
Doolaning & 2 children	Emb: 13/7/44
Soodeah & Child	" - " - "
Etivaree & 2 children	" - " - "
Lockonee	Id
Sordee	Emb:
Mayasree	Emb:
Pearree & child	Emb: 15/7/45
Rounia & 3 children	
Cormye	Emb: 15/7/45

Fig 5. Ship Arrival List of the *Donna Pascoa* showing the arrival of eleven female indentured labourers and eleven Indian children in June 1838.

MGIII/PE Series

Fig 6. Immigrant Mauracheea was 20 years old when she arrived in Mauritius from Bihar in 1838.

She worked as a labourer on Belle Mare Sugar Estate in Flacq District. She eventually took up employment as a domestic servant. She was 88 years old when she was photographed at the Immigration Depot in 1906.

She passed away in 1909 at the age of 91.

MGIII/PG, PE and PF Series



Immigrants Quiton and Taillame, two female Hindu indentured workers, arrived in Mauritius in December 1838 from Pondicherry. Shortly after, in June 1840, Mr and Mrs Plantin petitioned Governor Sir Lionel Smith to approve the transfer of the remaining period of their two female indentured servants to Mrs Edouard Marquet. This initiative was undertaken through the Colonial Secretary and the Police Department. Eventually the transfer was granted with some concerns being raised by John Finiss, Chief Commissary of Police. However, between 1839 and 1842, numerous such requests were granted for dozens of female indentured labourers and for hundreds of male indentured workers.

The undersigned respectfully solicits from your Excellency the permission to transfer to Mrs Edouard Marquet two Indian women previously engaged to her service and arrived on board the Graham capt. Allen the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1838, in conformity with the regulations on this subject

**Fig 7. Mr and Mrs Plantin's request to the Governor for authorization to transfer Immigrants Quiton and Taillame, two female indentured workers, in June 1840 to the service of Mrs Marquet.**

*MNA/RA Series*

In January 1843, the *Emerald Isle* arrived from Calcutta anchored at Mauritius having on board 213 men, 19 women and one child. The first registered female indentured immigrant under the newly established state-controlled indenture system was Rimoney. It is noteworthy that during the same year, 4,307 female immigrants were registered at the Immigration Depot representing 14% of the total number of Indian immigrants who were introduced into the colony.

		Women	
Rimoney	30	Shoptkeeper	Suggooday
Sacneah	30		St. Chan
Carraw	19		Goobhu

**Fig 8. The Ship Register of the *Emerald Isle* showing the arrival of Immigrant Rimoney in 1843.**

*MGHIA/PE Series/Courtesy of Mrs. L. Madhar-Suleiman*



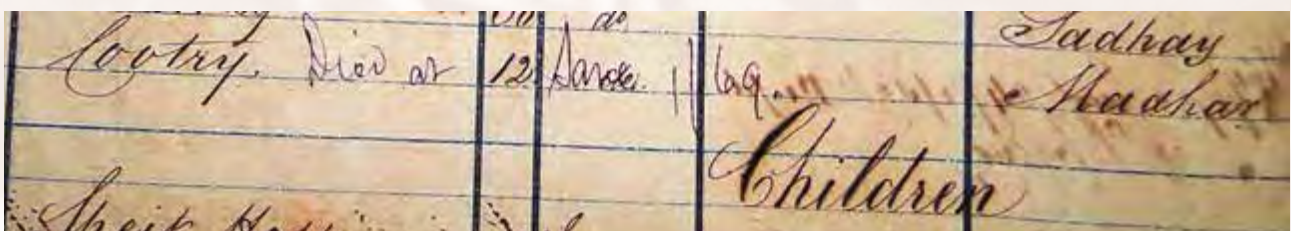


Immigrant Rimoney was 30 years old when she arrived in Mauritius. She was a Muslim widow from the village of Dakah, in northern Bihar. Rimoney had emigrated with her parents, Juggodess and Begum Fakim, to Calcutta where she worked, got married and lived for several years. After the death of her husband she came to Mauritius with Cootry, her 12-year old daughter. Rimoney was assigned number 215 and registered as a shopkeeper.

**Fig 9. Immigrant Rimoney was photographed at the age of 58 years at the Immigration Depot in 1871.**

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series/Courtesy of Mrs L. Madhar-Suleiman*

As immigrant Rimoney was literate, she was employed as store keeper in the estate office of Mr Langlois and Mr Lavoqueur, owners of the Triolet Sugar Estate in Pamplemousses District. In the late 1850s, Rimoney left her job at Triolet, bought a small wooden house and settled down in the village of Pamplemousses with her daughter Cootry. As from the 1860s, she started purchasing land and became a small landowner and vegetable cultivator. Eventually, Rimoney became involved in land speculation and acquired a small fortune. She died in 1905 at the ripe age of 92 and was buried in the Muslim Section of the Bois Marchand Cemetery



**Fig 10. Immigrant Cootry arrived in Mauritius as a 12-year old girl with her mother Rimoney in 1843.**

*MGIIIA/PE Series/Courtesy of Mrs. L. Madhar-Suleiman*

34 *Fatel Rohiman*

Name	Father's name	Place of birth
Cauleechum	Surroop	Molaw -
Maudy w.	Bhobaunmy	Molaw
Bholanauth	Rankurry	Molaw -
Cauly w	Mousaraw	Molaw
Ruhomaulty	Khurney	Messapore -
Cozerum w	Khurney	Messapore -
Hkeerah	Subrow	Tooraw
Rankolea w	Choolye	Tooraw
Bheeroo	Rughoorur	Koythee
Reekabeea w.	Monoruth	Koythee
Choychoo	Dayaly	Nanno.
Choollea w.	Loocha	Nanno
Gungabisoon	Mungur	Koythee
Soondurbocea w.	Kisoonah	Koythee
Joymungul	Bhundoos	Nigurnousa
Poolauroo w.	Auckul	Nigurnousa
Muhongoo	Rottoo	Powlutgunge
Dhunowteea w.	Bhugowaw	Powlutgunge

Fig 11. The arrival of the *Fatel Rohiman* from Calcutta in 1855 at the height of Indian indentured immigration in Mauritius, bringing several Bihari female immigrants.

# VISUALIZING THE PAST

## Indian Marriages:

The Case-Studies of Immigrants Lolytah, Bhoyrubee, and Others

**2<sup>ND</sup> IMMIGRATION.**

ARRIVALS OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS FROM 1843 TO 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 1852.

YEARS	CALCUTTA.					MADRAS.					BOMBAY.					TOTAL.								
	MEN.	WOMEN.	BOYS.	GIRLS.	INFANTS.	MEN.	WOMEN.	BOYS.	GIRLS.	INFANTS.	MEN.	WOMEN.	BOYS.	GIRLS.	INFANTS.	MEN.	WOMEN.	BOYS.	GIRLS.	INFANTS.				
																					B	G	B	G
1843	12,446	1,602	340	211	128	118	12,723	1,825	234	130	49	47	4,143	209	115	61	27	17	20,312	2,626	713	426	234	122
1844	8,122	880	402	306	123	134	1,302	201	79	31	19	19	225	100	11	2	8	8	9,679	1,260	489	222	118	129
1845	7,877	1,002	333	255	222	229	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7,877	1,002	333	255	222	229
1846	4,847	1,128	385	297	240	264	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,847	1,128	385	297	240	264
1 <sup>st</sup> Census	2,171	879	226	142	188	179	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,171	879	226	142	188	179
1847	6,565	282	277	45	32	48	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6,565	282	277	45	32	48
1848	4,422	384	224	43	32	39	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,422	384	224	43	32	39
1849	3,954	487	268	91	74	69	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,954	487	268	91	74	69
1850	4,207	794	483	82	186	29	2,902	421	112	85	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,207	794	483	82	186	29
1851	4,800	773	281	82	33	38	2,712	667	138	78	27	34	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,800	773	281	82	33	38
2 <sup>nd</sup> Census	4,208	478	246	74	70	72	2,218	597	139	78	37	24	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,208	478	246	74	70	72
1852	4,602	1,024	658	236	222	212	4,112	894	241	177	101	84	2,187	288	97	81	29	28	12,714	2,202	885	314	222	212
Total	81,291	10,408	4,248	1,422	1,208	1,220	21,420	3,208	866	347	229	207	7,221	1,206	220	127	81	47	81,291	10,408	4,248	1,422	1,208	1,220

T. HUGHES,  
Protector of Immigrants.

Table 2 showing the arrival of Indian immigrants from Calcutta, Madras and Bombay (1843 – 1852).

MNA/ARPI

Between the mid-1840s and mid-1860s, government officials, government regulations and policies, employers, European, Mauritian, and Indian labour recruiters and agents played a key role in encouraging females to emigrate to Mauritius. Their initiatives were successful enough as between 1851 and 1871, a balance was gradually attained between the male to female ratio on the island.

**MARRIAGES contracted in India by Indian Immigrants, and confirmed at Mauritius by the Protector of Immigrants.**

YEARS.	No. of marriages.	Total No. of females introduced.	Proportion of married women to total No. of females introduced.	REMARKS.
			Per centage.	
1850.....	640	1594	40	
—51.....	940	1763	53	
—52.....	1722	3814	45	
—53.....	1013	2267	44	
—54.....	1579	3489	45	
—55.....	1654	3270	50	
—56.....	2055	3523	58	
—57.....	2588	4085	63	
—58.....	4650	9014	51	
—59.....	6098	12754	47	

Fig 13. Table 3 Statistical return showing thousands of Indian marriages contracted in India which were confirmed by the Protector of Immigrants at the Immigration Depot between 1850 and 1859.

MNA/ARPI

As from the early 1850s, an ever increasing number of female immigrants accompanied their husbands to Mauritius. As a result, the Protector of Immigrants had the added responsibility of confirming marriages of young Indian immigrant couples. In 1850, 640 marriages were confirmed by the Immigration Office and nine years later, this number rose sharply to 6,098 marriages or a nine fold increase.

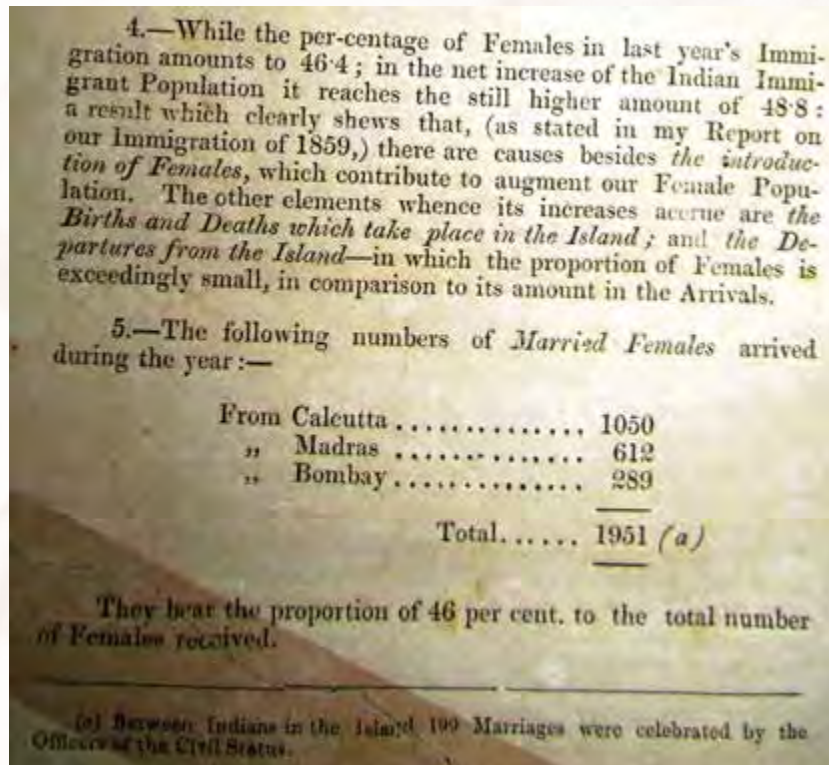


Fig 14. Observations of the Protector of Immigrants, and statistics on the arrival of Indian female immigrants and the issue of immigrant marriages in 1859.

MNA/ARPI

According to the PD Series or Immigrant Marriage Registers (MGIIIA), from January 1850 to August 1910, 40,500 marriages were registered and some 400 of them involved a male immigrant coming with two wives. Around 25,000 children and close relatives accompanied these married immigrant Indian couples<sup>2</sup>.

It is estimated that from 1850 to 1910, approximately 105,800 out of 348,000 Indian indentured immigrants who reached Port Louis landed with their parents and relatives. In addition, current research is indicating that 23,000 out of 54,300 immigrant children, or more than 42%, arrived with their parents and relatives to Mauritian shores between 1826 and 1910<sup>3</sup>.

2. Estimated from MGIIIA, PD 1 to 436, Indentured Immigrant Marriage Registers (1850 - 1910). Estimated from MGIIIA, PD 1 to 436, Indentured Immigrant Marriage Registers (1850 - 1910); PE 32 to PE 155, Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers and Distribution List for 1850 to 1910.

3. Estimated from MGIIIA/PE 1 to PE 161, Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers (1826 - 1910); MNA/The Mauritius Census of 1851 to 1921; CCSOA/KL Series, Marriages Registers (1860 - 1922); MNA & NL, The Mauritius Almanac of (1852 - 1922).

Name	Father's Name	Sex	Caste
<i>Married</i>			
<i>Reekhoey</i>	<i>Ajayeb</i>	MALE	<i>Doocud</i>
<i>band of Soobhogeer, Shoopah</i>			<i>Do</i>

Fig 15a. Immigrant Reekhoey arrived in Mauritius in 1831 with Immigrant Soobhogeato, his wife, and their three sons. In 1850, nineteen years later, they applied to the The Protector of Immigrants for a Marriage Certificate which was granted to them as former indentured workers at the Immigration Depot.

MGIIIA/PD Series/ MNA/Z2D Series/Courtesy of Mr D. Reekhoey

**MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.**

Descriptive Roll of *Dookhny & her husband Raunkoor* proceeding to Mauritius  
 per Ship *Blue Jacket* on the *28<sup>th</sup>* day of *August* 1857

Agent's Registered No.	Name	Father's Name	Sex	Caste	Age	Place of Nativity	Remarks
<i>220</i>	<i>Dookhny</i>	<i>Dooloooy</i>		<i>Doocud</i>			
	<i>with husband &amp; sons</i>	<i>Raunkoor</i>					

Certified that the above described Indians whose signatures are herewith attached here this day were before me and each of them separately and also in the presence of one another has declared to me before the two witnesses who have also signed this certificate that they are legally married to each other according to the Forms and Ceremonies of their religion and that the children above named are the lawful issue of such marriage.

Witnesses in the above declaration: *Dookhny* & *Raunkoor*

Officer of the Protector of Immigrants

Witnesses to the above declaration: *Doocud* & *Doocud*

Witnesses to the above declaration: *Doocud* & *Doocud*

Fig 15b. The Marriage Certificate of Immigrant Dookhny, who arrived in Mauritius with Immigrant Raunkoor to whom she was legally married, and their three sons. The Protector of Immigrants issued this Marriage Certificate to Dookhny and her husband upon their arrival from Calcutta in 1857.

MGIIIA/PD Series/Courtesy of Mr V. Dookhny Ram

The Mauritius Census, a Mauritius Almanac, and the KL Series of the Civil Status Office indicate that between January 1850 and December 1922, some 49,200 civil marriages involving Indian immigrants and Indo-Mauritians were recorded. It is important to note that from 1850 to 1922, around 89,600 Indian immigrants and Indo-Mauritians contracted a civil marriage, legitimized their children, and thousands among them secured their property ownership rights. As early as the 1850s and 1860s, Indian immigrant and Indo-Mauritian families were gradually becoming an integral part of the vast and complex indentured and ex-indentured labour community in Mauritius<sup>5</sup>.

5. Estimated from from MNA/The Mauritius Census of (1851 - 1921); CCSOA/KL Series, Marriages Registers for (1860 - 1922); MNA & NL, The Mauritius Almanac of (1852 - 1922); MGIIIA, PD 1 to 436, Indentured Immigrant Marriage Registers for 1850 to 1910; PE 32 to PE 155, Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers and Distribution List for (1850 - 1910).

During the 1850s, a marriage certificate was issued to married Indian couples upon their arrival at the Immigration Depot, in the presence of the Protector of Immigrants and two witnesses. the husband and wife were required to place their mark above a paragraph which clearly stated:

*“We the above described Indians hereby declare that we have been married to each other according to the Forms and Ceremonies of our Creeds and that the children above-named are the lawful issue of such marriages.”*



16a. Immigrant Lolytah arrived in 1851 at the age of 18 with her husband Immigrant Ramdhun from Bihar. She was legally married, and confirmed through a marriage certificate by the Protector of Immigrants upon their arrival.

They were both literate and signed their immigrant marriage certificate.

She was photographed at 50 years old at the Immigration Depot in 1883.

She passed away in 1908 at Bel Air the age of 74.

*MGIIIA/PG, PE, and PD Series/Courtesy of Mr. S. Peerthum*

EMIGRATION CERTIFICATE.									
Name	Father's Name	Sex	Class	Age	Relig.	Profession	Village	Remarks	
(Maurit.) Lolytah	Ganum	FEMALE		18	Hindu	Education	Gylah		
<p>I hereby certify that I have approved your request for admission as a subject for Emigration having been examined and being well and free from all bodily diseases.</p> <p>I hereby certify that the EMIGRANT above described, whom I have engaged as a subject in the name of the Government of Mauritius for approved letters no. and I have applied to her for all duties concerning her as a subject according to the Mauritius, according to Chapter 104 of the Mauritius Code as amended on the 15th January 1904.</p>									

**Fig 16b. Immigrant Lolytah arrived in Mauritius at the age of 18 from Bihar and resided at La Louise Sugar Estate in Flacq District. In 1866, after the death of her husband, Sirdar Ramdhun, due to malaria, she engaged in the petite bande on the same sugar for several years. Eventually, she purchased a small plot of land at Bel Air-Rivière Sèche village where she passed away in 1908.**

*MGIIIA/PE, PG and PF Series/CSO/RGD/Courtesy of S. Peerthum*

Name and Surname of  
Father and Mother.  
Profession and Domicile.

Ramdhun  
No 93555  
Sirdar of  
La Louise  
Estate and  
Lolytah No  
93441 no  
calling of the  
same Estate  
his wife.

In 1846, around 9% of the female Indian immigrants was engaged on some type of indenture contract on the sugar estates, in Port Louis, and other parts of the island. Between the late 1840s and early 1860s, this figure fell to around 3%. Ordinance No. 16 of 1862 that was enacted by the local British administration allowed female immigrants to engage for a period of 12-months in the *petite bande* on sugar estates to perform light work.

Between 1860 and 1865, the number of female labourers employed on sugar estates rose to more than 1500 labourers. The archival records reveal that between the late 1860s and mid-1870s, the number of female Indian immigrants and Indo-Mauritians under contract increased from 3% to 7%. However, by 1890s and early 1900s, less than 2% of Indian and Indo-Mauritian females were under some type of indenture contract on sugar estates and in Port Louis.

Fig 16c. The Civil Status Office document indicating that Immigrant Lolytah and Sirdar Ramdhun who arrived in Mauritius in 1851 were legally married and they were literate CSO/Courtesy of S.Peerthum

Iskender Shah, 1873  
Distribution de 2<sup>e</sup> Juin 1873

Women engaged for two years  
at the following rates: 1<sup>st</sup> Year 1000 francs per month  
2<sup>d</sup> de 1200 francs

Umbeka  
Kameenee

M. b. Cassam - Port Louis  
M. d. A. Saniv - Grand Port

Fig 16d. The Ship Arrival Register of the *Iskender Shah* in June 1873 showing the two-year indenture agreements of Umbeka and Kameenee, two female Indian indentured workers.

MGIIIA/PF Series



Fig 16e. Immigrant Bhoyrubee aged 21 arrived with Goolub, her husband and two sons from the port of Calcutta in 1852. They were from the Bancoorah region of West Bengal. Her husband passed away in 1859. Despite being a widow with children, unlike in India, she got married again in 1862 to Immigrant Sirdar Nundlall who had arrived in 1849.

She had several children with her second husband and ran his household on Mon Loisir Sugar Estate for almost two decades. She was photographed at the age of 49 at the Immigration Depot in 1880. Bhoyrubee passed away at the age of 55 in 1886 at Beau Sejour Sugar Estate in Rivière du Rempart District.

MGIIIA/PG, PE, and PD Series/Courtesy of S.Peerthum

**MAHATMA GANDHI INSTITUTE**  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT  
Moka - Mauritius  
TEL: 433-7578/403-2037, FAX 433-7578  
Email: mgiarchives@yahoo.co

Duplicate Copy

Name of Immigrant	Bhoyrubee		
Immigrant Number	102597	Photo No	66897 (23/393)
Father's Name	Mohun	Mother's Name	
Next of Kin	Husband & Sons	Residence	
Age	21 Yrs	Sex	F
Married in India to	Goolub	Height	Mid
Married in Mauritius to		Number	102990
Place of Marriage	W Bengal (Bancoorah)	Date of Marriage	
Zillah	Bancoorah	Pergunnah	Butooporee
Village	Jotoomoojee		
Port of Origin	Calcutta		
Name of Ship	Pattay Salata	Ship No	453
Date of Arrival	09/03/1852	Reached Depot Mauritius	09/03/1852
Employer's Name		Estate	
Distribution	12/03/1852	District	
Return to India Fee		Date	
Died On	16/05/1886	Place	Riviere du Rempart
Remarks			

Compiled by V. Govinden Name Mr. Peerthum Satyendex  
Head of Department Mr. Jagan Ramnany  
Signature [Signature] Address Solferino No. 4, Vacous  
Date 10.03.2013  
ID/No P2703763010318

Fig 16f. The MGI Immigrant Certificate of Bhoyrubee.

Courtesy of S.Peerthum

**Certified Extract of a Death Entry**  
(Pursuant to the Civil Status Act 1981)

Extrait Certifié de l'Etat des Décès  
(Conformément aux dispositions de la loi de 1981 relative à l'Etat Civil)

Registration District District de l'Enregistrement	Rivière du Rempart	Certificate Number Numéro du Certificat	103
Registration Office Bureau de l'Enregistrement	Piton	Date of Registration Date de l'inscription	16/05/1886
Registered by Enregistré par	Marcus A.		

---

**DECEASED - DÉFUNTE**

Surname Nom	Bhoyrubee No 102,597	NID Number No. de carte nationale d'identité	
Names Prénoms			
Occupation Profession	No profession Sans Profession		
Address Adresse	Beau Sejour, Pamplemousses		
Marital Status Statut matrimonial	Widow Veuve	Date and Time of death Date et heure du décès	15/05/1886 11:00
Religion Religion	Hindu	Sex Sexe	F - Femme/Féminin
Place of Birth Lieu de naissance	Calcutta	Age Age	35 Year(s)/Ann(ee)
Place of Death Lieu de décès	Beau Sejour Estate		
Place of Burial/Cremation Lieu d'inhumation/crémation			

---

**SPOUSE - CONJONTE**

Surname Nom		NID Number No. de carte nationale d'identité	
Names Prénoms			

---

**FATHER - PERE**

Surname Nom	Mohun 102330	NID Number No. de carte nationale d'identité	
Names Prénoms			

Fig 16g. The Civil Status Office document of Immigrant Bhoyrubee showing her bio-data.

CSO/ Courtesy of S.Peerthum



# A Profile of Immigrant Soondory

**MAHATMA GANDHI INSTITUTE**  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT  
Roka - Mauritius  
TEL: 433-7578/403-2037, FAX 433-7578  
Email: mgiarchives@yahoo.co

2688

Name of Immigrant: Soondory

Immigrant Number: 173883 Photo No: 70835 (24/36)

Father's Name: Bhojrub Mother's Name:

Next of Kin: Husband Residence:

Age: 18 Yrs Sex: f Height: Low

Marrned in India to: Gopaul Number: 173697

Marrned in Mauritius to:

Place of Marriage: Date of Marriage:

Zillah: Puroolea Pergunnah: Jhurreea Village: Khas Jhurreea

Port of Origin: Calcutta

Name of Ship: Famy Allum Ship No: 693

Date of Arrival: Reached Depot Mauritius

Employer's Name: Estate:

Distribution: 27/11/1856 District:

Return to India Per: Date:

Died On: Place:

Remarks:

---

Compiled by: V. Goussier Name: Mr. Dhuny Dharam Yash Deo

Head of Department: Mr. Javen Komary Signature:

Signature: Address: Royal Road Barlow Riviere du Rempart

Date: 28. 03. 2003

ID/No: D080054150705C

Fig 17a. The MGI Immigrant Certificate of Soondory which was recently issued to Mr. Dharam Yash Deo Dhuny, one of her descendants.

*Courtesy Mr D.Y.D. Dhuny*



Fig 17b. Immigrant Soondory arrived in Mauritius at the age of 18. With her husband Gopaul from Calcutta in 1856.

She was a young Bengali woman from the village of Khas Jhurreea in the province of Puroolea in West Bengal and her father was Bhojrub.

They were sent to work on a sugar estate in Flacq district.

She was photographed in 1881 when she was 43 years old. Soondory was a well-dressed and wore some of her personal jewelry which was an outward sign that she had achieved some measure of social and economic mobility.

*MGHIA, PG and PE Series/Courtesy Mr. D.Y.D. Dhuny and D. Dhuny*

Fig 18. The *Edmundsbury* arrived in February 1863 from Madras with 261 passengers which included 93 females or 35% of the total number of immigrants on board. In the 1860s and 1870s, some of the female immigrants went to work on some of the sugar estates in Rivière du Rempart District.

*MGHIA/PE and PF Series*

	Men.	Women.	Boys.	Girls.	Infants.		
					Boys.	Girls.	
Embarked ....	142	64	25	25	1	4	<b>TOTALS.</b> Males Females Embarked .. 168 93 261 Landed .... 168 93 261
On Board ..							
On Board ..							
Landed .....	142	64	25	25	1	4	

244  
 Ramma (W)



Fig 19. Immigrant Ramma arrived in Mauritius from Bombay in 1864 at the age of 20.

She was married to Immigrant Rannoo. They both worked as labourers for Mr Dominique Galea, the owner of Valetta Sugar Estate.

Ramma was registered as an Old Immigrant in 1869. During the 1890s, Ramma and Rannoo purchased a plot of land near Quartier Militaire village and became small vegetable cultivators. Ramma was photographed at age of 61 at the Immigration Depot in 1905.

The following year, she passed away on a sugar estate near Quartier Militaire in Moka District.

*MGIIIA/PG, PE and PF Series/MNA/PB Series*

Gunga	Muljee	23	Female	5	Hyje	Hyje	Dattara
Tanna	Duroo	5	"	"	"	"	"
<del>Booshna</del>	<del>Lucimon</del>	<del>21</del>	<del>Male</del>	<del>5</del>	<del>Hyje</del>	<del>Hyje</del>	<del>Dattara</del>
<del>1/10/19</del>	<del>1/10/19</del>	<del>21</del>	<del>7/19</del>	<del>38</del>	<del>Hyje</del>	<del>Hyje</del>	<del>Dattara</del>
Ramma	Bjoo	20	Female	4	Hyje	Bhudungue	Colapex

*Handwritten notes in red ink:*  
 at Quartier Militaire 3.9.06  
 2/163342 - 22/2/05/42  
 27/8/69

Fig 20. Immigrants Ramma, Gunga and other female Marathi immigrants took advantage of the 1862 law to engage under the 12-month contract as labourers in the petite bande on a sugar estate in Black River in the 1860s and 1870s.

*MGIIIA/PG, PE and PF Series/MNA/PB Series*

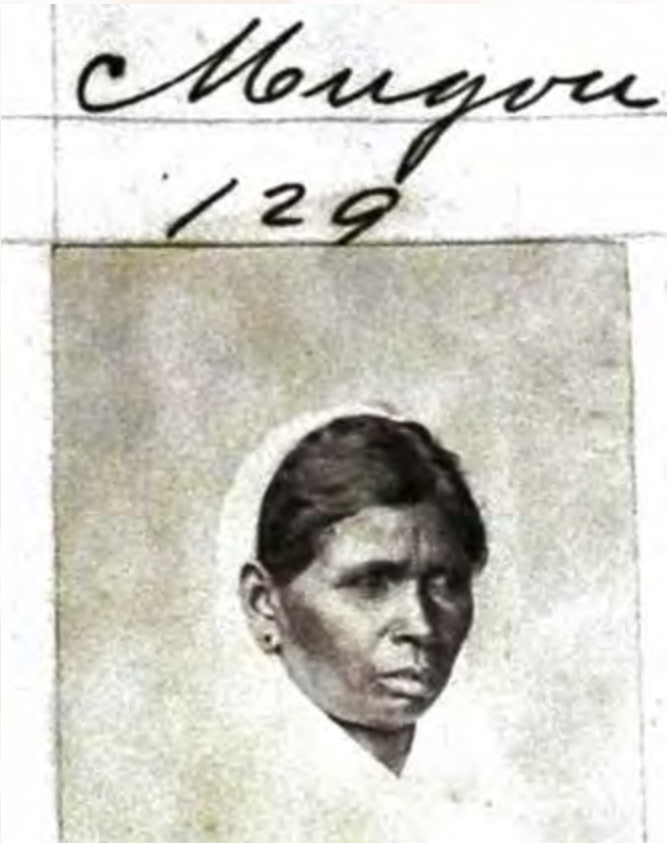


**Fig 21. Immigrant Mattalia arrived in Mauritius from Madras in 1870 as a baby girl. She was photographed at the age of 13 in 1881. She was engaged as a child labourer to do light work on a Mauritian sugar estate.**

*MGIIIA/PG, PE and PF Series*

The *Labour Laws of 1867 and 1878* required Indian immigrant women to be photographed for various reasons. And as from the 1870s up to the early 1900s, several thousand of women proceeded to the Immigration Depot in Port Louis to have their pictures taken in order to obtain:

1. Their Old Immigrant Ticket as ex-indentured workers under one-year contract.
2. A certificate of non-marriage if they wished to declare their newly born children, get married or if their husband passed away and wanted to get married again
3. A document required for land purchase, inherit a plot of land or property from their husband or parents
4. A required document to obtain a permit or licence as a trader to open a business.



**Fig 22. Immigrant Mugon arrived in Mauritius at the age of 14 in 1846. She worked as a domestic servant in the house of the Le Clézio family in Moka District.**

In 1881, she was photographed at the age of 49 as a widow at the Immigration Depot. She had to obtain her Old Immigrant ticket as proof of her identity in order to inherit a property her husband had left her near Moka village where they were small vegetable cultivators. She died in Moka District in 1903 at the age of 71.

*MGIIIA/PG, PE and PF Series*



Fig 23. The photos of female and children Indian immigrants which were taken at the Immigration Depot in 1881.

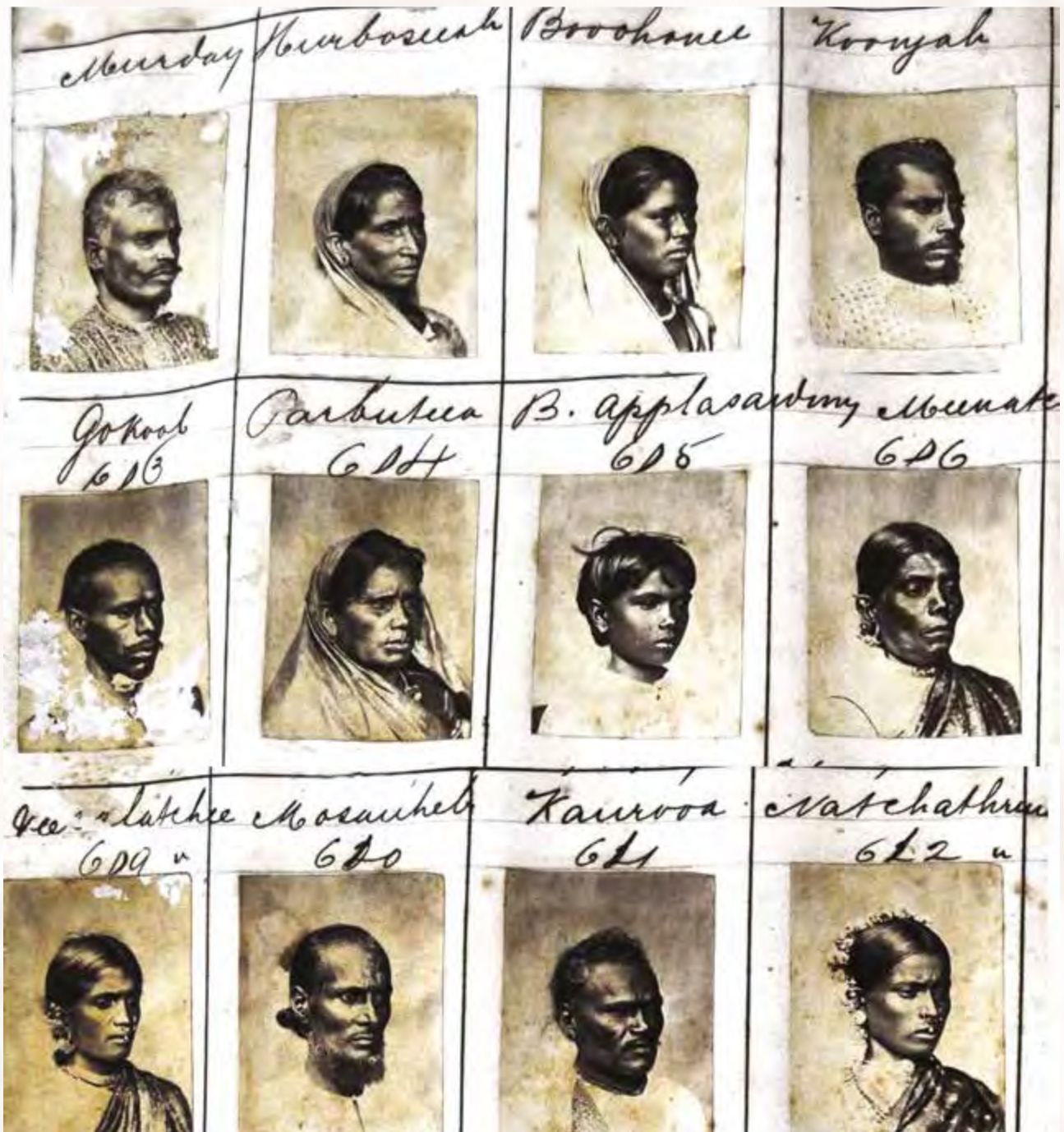


Fig 24. The photos of Immigrants Hurboseseah, Parbuteea and other female Indian immigrants who had resided for several years in Mauritius. The photos were taken at the Immigration Depot during the early 1880s.

MGIIIA/PG Series

**Distribution of Immigrants per Ship** *S.S. Wardha* No. 1339 from *Madras*.

Date of Arrival	Employer	Ship	District	Specialty		Allotted							Distributed without engagements				TOTALS	REMARKS		
				Contracted in India	Not contracted in India	Secretary General	Public Department	Orphan Asylum	Railway Contractors	Emigrants	Infants	M	F	M	F	M			F	M
				H	B	W	G	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	Males	Females	
1889																				
		<i>James W. H. Coyne &amp; Schoenfeld R. Salt</i>	<i>57</i>																	
		<i>Sammut &amp; Union Vale &amp; Port</i>	<i>24</i>																	
		<i>Sammut &amp; Union Vale &amp; Port</i>	<i>21</i>																	
		<i>Highland &amp; Co. Combs Saran</i>	<i>17</i>																	
			<i>119</i>																	

**Fig 25.** Arrival of 59 Indian female immigrants on board the *Wardha* from Madras. They were distributed without labour engagements to sugar estates in different regions of Mauritius in 1889.

MGIIIA/PE Series

According to the *Mauritius Census of 1901*, around 116,000 Indians and Indo-Mauritian females resided on the island in 1901.

1410 Ship *M.S. "SURADA"* Arrived *8<sup>th</sup> August 1910*

Ship No.	NAME	Name of Father	Name of Mother	Sex	Age	Site of Birth
	<i>Bansi</i>	<i>Gurdajal</i>	<i>Somaria</i>	<i>✓ M</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>Shankar Rajpur</i>
	<i>Jagunni Bhattar</i>		<i>Phagia</i>	<i>✓ -</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Chhitar</i>
	<i>Lakhia</i>	<i>Chammam</i>	<i>Subhogia</i>	<i>✓ F</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>Japania</i>
	<i>Jadda</i>	<i>Rangila</i>	<i>Lakhia</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Lakhia</i>

**Fig 26.** Immigrant Lakhia, with her infant son Jadda, was among the last Indian female immigrants to arrive in Mauritius on the *Surada* in August 1910. Lakhia was employed as a labourer on Labourdonnais sugar estate in the north of the island. Dissatisfied with her living and working conditions, more than a year later, she left the colony in October 1911.

MGIIIA/PE/PF/PB/PJ Series



Fig 27 (a) and (b) Immigrants Janki and Sarjudai, two sisters, were among the last Indian female immigrants to arrive in Mauritius in 1910. They were employed as domestic servants under the 12 month -contract for the Wiehe family on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate. They were photographed at the Immigration Depot in 1914.

*MGIIIA/PE, PG and PF Series*



Female Indian immigrants and Indo-Mauritians made to elaborate a major and long standing contribution to the making of modern Mauritius as labourers, small cultivators, landowners, business women and as the mothers, wives and daughters of Indian indentured labourers.

## Chapter Two

# An Overview of the Children Indentured Immigrants

Child labour was a current and widespread phenomenon during the 19th century as attested by the indentured labour system. During the entire Age of Indenture in Mauritius, which roughly began from 1826 to 1910, an estimated number of 54,324 babies, infants, and children immigrants, or 12%, arrived in Mauritius. They were ranged from only a few months old to just under 16 years of age. Between 1826 and 1834, scores of children were engaged as domestic servants on three or five-year labour contracts by Franco-Mauritian and British planters, slave owners, landowners, merchants, and negociants, British colonial officials, residents, and visitors.

The wealthy free coloured and Indian small landowners, businessmen, merchants, traders, and negociants also employed. During their indenture, they were trained for specific jobs, received a wage and were provided with accommodation, food and three pairs of clothes each year.

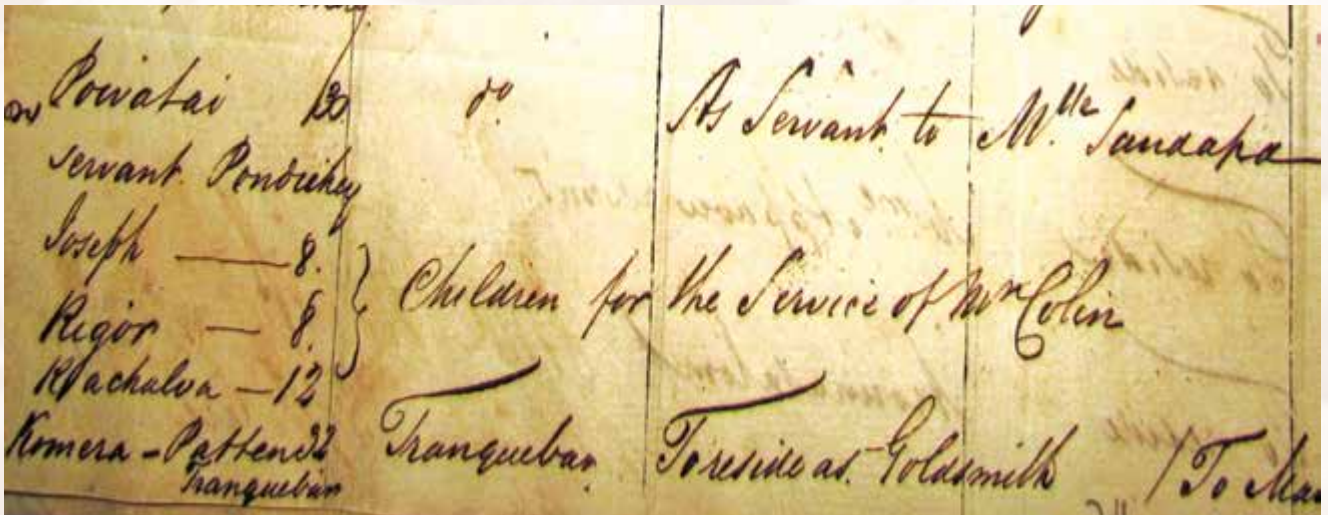


Fig 28. Immigrants Joseph, Rigor and Rachalva were Indian Christian children who were recruited as domestic servants from Tranquebar, southern India, for Mr. Colin, a well-known resident of Port Louis in 1830.

MNA/Z2D Series



YEARS.	CALCUTTA.				MADRAS.				BOMBAY.				TOTAL.			
	M	W	B	G	M	W	B	G	M	W	B	G	M	W	B	G
1834 — — —	36	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	39	—	—	—	75	—	—	—
1835 — — —	1,101	59	22	11	59	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,160	61	22	11
1836 — — —	2,978	131	18	10	641	43	2	—	—	—	—	—	3,619	174	20	10
1837 — — —	4,267	177	59	29	2,546	136	7	3	60	8	—	—	6,873	321	66	32
1838 — — —	6,267	151	29	10	5,117	70	15	10	139	—	—	—	11,523	221	44	20
1839 — — —	250	4	—	—	678	98	2	—	—	—	—	—	931	102	2	—
1840 — — —	18	1	—	—	79	6	—	—	10	—	—	—	107	9	—	—
1841 — — —	75	7	3	2	389	26	16	8	16	—	—	—	480	33	19	10
1842 — — —	54	4	2	1	15	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	69	8	4	2
	15,042	554	133	63	9,524	337	44	22	264	8	—	—	24,837	929	177	85

Fig 29. Table 4: Statistics showing the arrival of Indian Immigrant boys and girls between 1834 and 1842.

MNA/ARPI

It was only between 1834 and 1842 that a significant number of indentured Indian child labourers began to arrive in Port Louis. A total of 262 young children and infants, which included 177 males and 85 females, reached Mauritius.

Basiraji  
Goolab  
Sooklall, Wife Marie + child Fagoo  
Binat

Fig 30. Immigrant Sooklall, his wife Marie, and Fagoo, their only son, arrived in Mauritius in 1837. Fagoo was 9 year old. He was assigned an immigrant number.

MGIIIA/PE Series

"Women"	
Bulea	Emb: 15/40
Sagoure	Emb: 3/8/40
Dejun or Degum,	
Kocunmy	
Haroo	Emb: 23/6/40
Secuariah & her son Boodoo n <sup>o</sup> : 19, 20, 40	
Ratanee	Emb: 5/11/40
Rookmin	
Madou, and her 3 children	Emb: 1/7/40
Paroo/10/4	

Fig 31. Immigrant Boodoo accompanied by his mother Secuariah, and Madou and her three children, arrived in Mauritius from Calcutta in May 1837. Madou returned to India with her children in 1843.

MGIIIA/PE Series

As from the mid-1840s, the overwhelming majority of Indian immigrant children arrived from the Bengal Presidency. They were mainly from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. It is interesting to note that no immigrant children came from the Madras Presidency and the Bombay Presidency between 1845 and 1849.

Amderdalingum	9
Chendelroyu	8
Singamathu	5
Meeneemah	8
Suremby	2
Taru	2

Fig 32. Extract from a list of indentured children, including their ages, arriving on board the ship *The Kingston* from the Madras Presidency in July 1843.

MGIIIA/PE Series

Children ...	{	Introduced . . . . .	4863	}	391 . . . . .	4472
		Deaths	160			
		Departures	231			
Remaining on 31st December 1849 . . . . .					59385	

**Fig 33. Around 4,863 indentured immigrant children were introduced between 1834 and 1849. During the same period, it is estimated that only 4,472 among them survived to complete their first indenture contract.**

*MNA/ARPI*



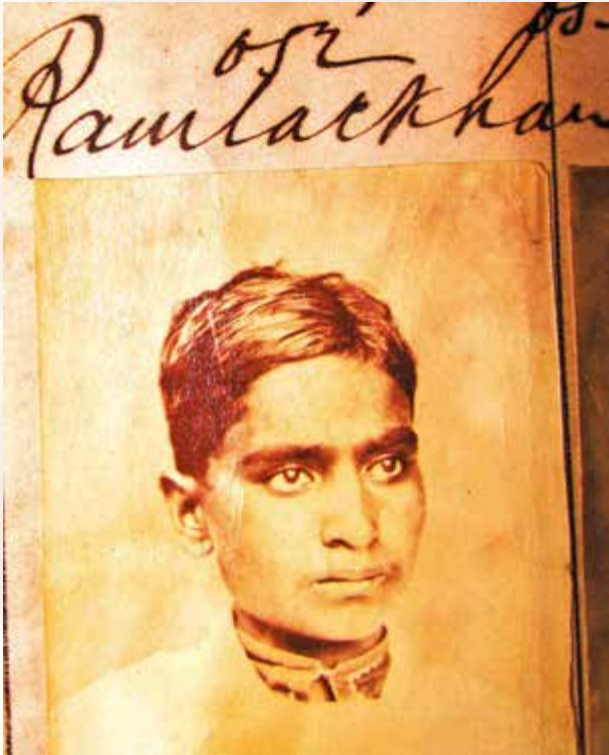
**Fig 34. Immigrant Motya arrived at the age of 15 in 1837 from Calcutta. He was from Bihar and was originally a labourer. He was able to become educated and worked as a clerk in the colonial administration in Port Louis. He was photographed at the age of 48 at the Immigration Depot in 1870.**

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series, MNA/PB Series/Courtesy of Mr. A. Motya*



**Fig 35. Immigrant Paliandee arrived at the age of 14 in 1837 from Madras. He was from the Malabar coast of India. He performed light work on sugar estates. Paliandee learned to read, write and do basic maths and by the 1860s, he was able to open his own small business in Port Louis. He was 46 years old when he was photographed at the Immigration Depot in 1869.**

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series, MNA/PB Series/Courtesy of Mr. L. Paliandee*



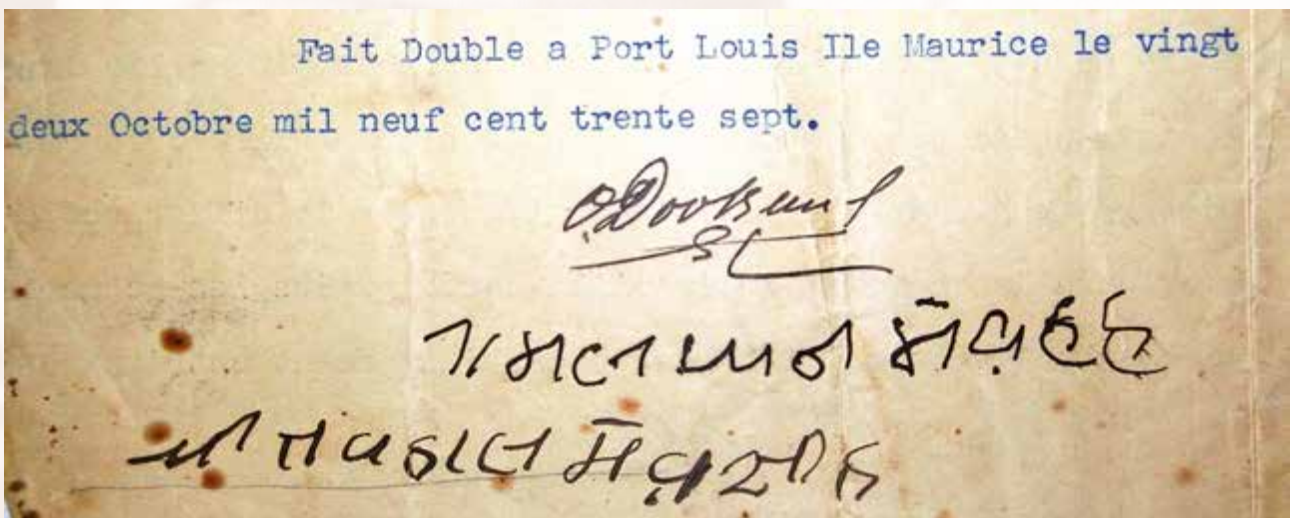
**Fig 36a.** Immigrant Ramlackhan, son of Immigrants Mewasingh and Lugnee, was from Beernah, Arrah district in Bihar, India. He arrived in Mauritius from the port of Calcutta in 1878 with his parents at the age of 4.

They settled in Solferino, Vacoas.

By the 1910s, Ramlackhan Mewasingh became a sirdar and shortly after a small landowner and sugar cane planter.

He was photographed in 1889 at the age of 15. He passed away at the age of 69 in Vacoas.

*MGIII/PG, PE, and PF Series/  
Courtesy of the Late Mr. D. Ramlackhan*



**Fig 36b.** on 22nd October 1937, Ramlackhan Mewasingh purchased six arpents and 87 perches of land from Mr. Oathin Dooknah or Dookun, resident of Quatre Bornes, for the amount of Rs.5,200 which was recorded by Mr. Alfred Montocchio, a notary of Plaines Wilhems district.

The land which he bought used to belong to Bassin Sugar Estate. During the late 1930s and 1940s, he grew sugar cane on that land which he sent to be crushed at Medine Sugar Estate in the nearby northern Black River district.

The above illustrated document shows the land purchase from October 1937 with Immigrant Ramlackhan's signature as he was literate.

*Courtesy of the Late Mr. D.Ramlackhan*

*Winged* 33843

Emigration Office,  
Calcutta, 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 1843

EMIGRATION AGENCY CERTIFICATE

Name	Father's Name	Age	Height		Village	Profession	Zillah	Remarks
			ft.	in.				
Mootree (Girl)	Kheeroodhur	3	2	10 7/8	Harrah	Maheya	Chittagong	good teeth & healthy on the right temple spring with the parent.

I hereby certify that the <sup>girl</sup> ~~man~~ above described, has appeared before me, and I have explained to <sup>her</sup> ~~him~~ all matters concerning <sup>her</sup> ~~him~~ as an Emigrant proceeding to the Mauritius according to Clause 3rd of Schedule attached to Her Majesty's Order in Council of 15th January 1842.

*R. Smith*

**Fig 37a. Mootree's Immigration Certificate which was issued in Calcutta in 1843, when she was 3 years old.**

*MGIII/PC Series/Courtesy of Mr. A.R.Teerbhooan*



**Fig 37b. Immigrant Mootree arrived in Mauritius at the age of 3 in 1844 with Kheeroodhur, her father, who travelled as a free passenger on the same ship. In 1854, she got married as a child to Immigrant Teerbhooan. In 1881, she was photographed at 41 years old at the Immigration Depot when she obtained a non-marriage certificate shortly after her husband's death. Mootree, a former labourer, became a small property owner.**

*MGIII/PG, PE and PF Series/  
Courtesy of Mr. A.R.Teerbhooan*



**Fig 38. Immigrant Radhay arrived in Mauritius as a young indentured child from Calcutta in 1876. He was engaged on Saint Felix Sugar Estate In the district of Savanne. He was photographed in 1879 at the age of 18.**

*MGIII/PH and PF Series*

**Fig 39. Immigrant Dwarka also known as Koreemun arrived in Mauritius for the first time in 1856 from Réunion Island as a child immigrant. He was 14 years old. He left Calcutta in 1851 when he was 9 years old for Réunion Island where he worked and lived for five years. In Mauritius, he served two consecutive five-year labour contracts and then became a day labourer. Between 1869 and 1871, he was arrested on several occasions as a vagrant. In July 1871, Dwarka was deported from the colony as an incorrigible vagrant. He was photographed in 1871 at the age of 29 at the Immigration Depot before his deportation from Mauritius.**

*MGIII/PE, PF and PH Series  
MNA/PB and RA Series*





Fig 40. In October 1871, Immigrant Dwarka returned to Mauritius under the name of Koreemun.

Four months later, he was arrested once again as a vagrant and deported with another group of incorrigible vagrants.

He was photographed for a second time at the Immigration Depot as a vagrant in February 1872.

*MGIIIA/PB, PE, and PO Series*

87.—The Directors met on the 21st of last month,\* to examine the condition of the Establishment, and inquire into, and report upon, its wants. The institution then contained the following numbers of children :

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Indians.....	119	17	136
Africans.....	76	7	83
Totals. ....	195	24	219

88.—The scholastic instruction and industrial training of these Indian children were unavoidably interrupted and disturbed considerably during the latter part of the year by the arrangements it became necessary to go through to provide accommodation for the large number of African Children received from the Slave-Ship *Manuella* and by the bad state of health in which many of these arrived. Yet, on the whole, their intellectual and industrial improvement is very satisfactory.

Fig 41. The Protector of Immigrants reporting on the Education of Indian Immigrant Children and the Conditions at the Orphans Asylum during the early 1860s.

*MNA/ARPI*

By 1859, the majority of the Indian immigrant children had already reached Port Louis. However, the ship arrival registers, distribution lists and immigrant photos show that between the 1860s and the early 1900s, thousands of immigrant children were registered at the Immigration Depot, entered into labour contracts on the sugar estates and were frequently arrested as vagrants. From the 1870s until the early 1900s, Indian children usually young boys, were regularly arrested as vagrants and deserters.

Men.	Women.	Boys.	Girls.	Infants.	
				Boys.	Girls.
142	64	25	25	1	4
.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.
142	64	25	25	1	4

Fig 42. The Arrival List of an Indenture Ship from India in 1863 which shows an important presence of children immigrants among the passengers.

MGIIIA/PE Series

Sutchmee  
 Boy  
 Varatharajulo  
 Girls.  
 Angamah  
 Amoorthan  
 Rungarajasee  
 Ellamah

Fig 43. Distribution of young children who arrived on the *Vimeira* in June 1878 from the port city of Madras.


MGIIIA/PE Series



Date of condemnation	District where condemned	Length of condemnation
11. 6. 94	Port Louis	1 month
10. 1. 99	- Do -	1 month
15. 7. 01	- Do -	3 months & 2 days

Fig 44 (a) and (b). Immigrant Sabapathi arrived in Mauritius as a young teenager in 1882. He was arrested and convicted 14 times for vagrancy between 1885 and 1901. He was the most well known vagrant on the island between the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

MGIIIA/PH and PE Series/Courtesy of Mr. J.Sabapathi

Name of Immigrant		Sabapathi
Number		296, 911
Name of Father		Annasami pillai
Name of Mother		Periyanaqum
Age in 1882		17 years
Stature		1 Metre & 53 Cent
Marks		Water Mark on forehead
<b>CONVICTIONS AS VAGRANTS.</b>		
Date of condemnation.	District where condemned.	Length of condemnation.
6 <sup>th</sup> Nov 1885	Port Louis	7 days ✓
6 <sup>th</sup> July 1885	- do -	1 month ✓
16 - 1 - 86	- do -	2 months ✓
9. 7. 86	- do -	3 - 4 ✓
15. 6. 87	- do -	3 months ✓
24. 10. 87	- do -	3 months ✓
20 - 1 - 88	- do -	3 months ✓
13 - 7 - 88	- do -	3 months ✓
10 - 10 - 88	St. Williams	3 months ✓
27. 9. 1889	Port Louis	3 months ✓
20. 10. 90	Mahe	1 month ✓

During the 1890s and the early 1900s, several hundred Indian child immigrants were registered at the Immigration Depot. The majority still originated from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and other parts of northern India while only a small minority emanating from the present-day States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Telangana.

Even during the last years of the indentured labour system in, many of them were engaged under contract on the sugar estates in the petite bande or the small gang doing light work. At the same time, between 1891 and 1911, thousands of Indo-Mauritian children who were born on the sugar estates and in the newly emerging villages worked on the sugar estates. The Indian indentured children and the Indo-Mauritian children formed an integral part of the rural work force even after the end of the indenture system in 1910.

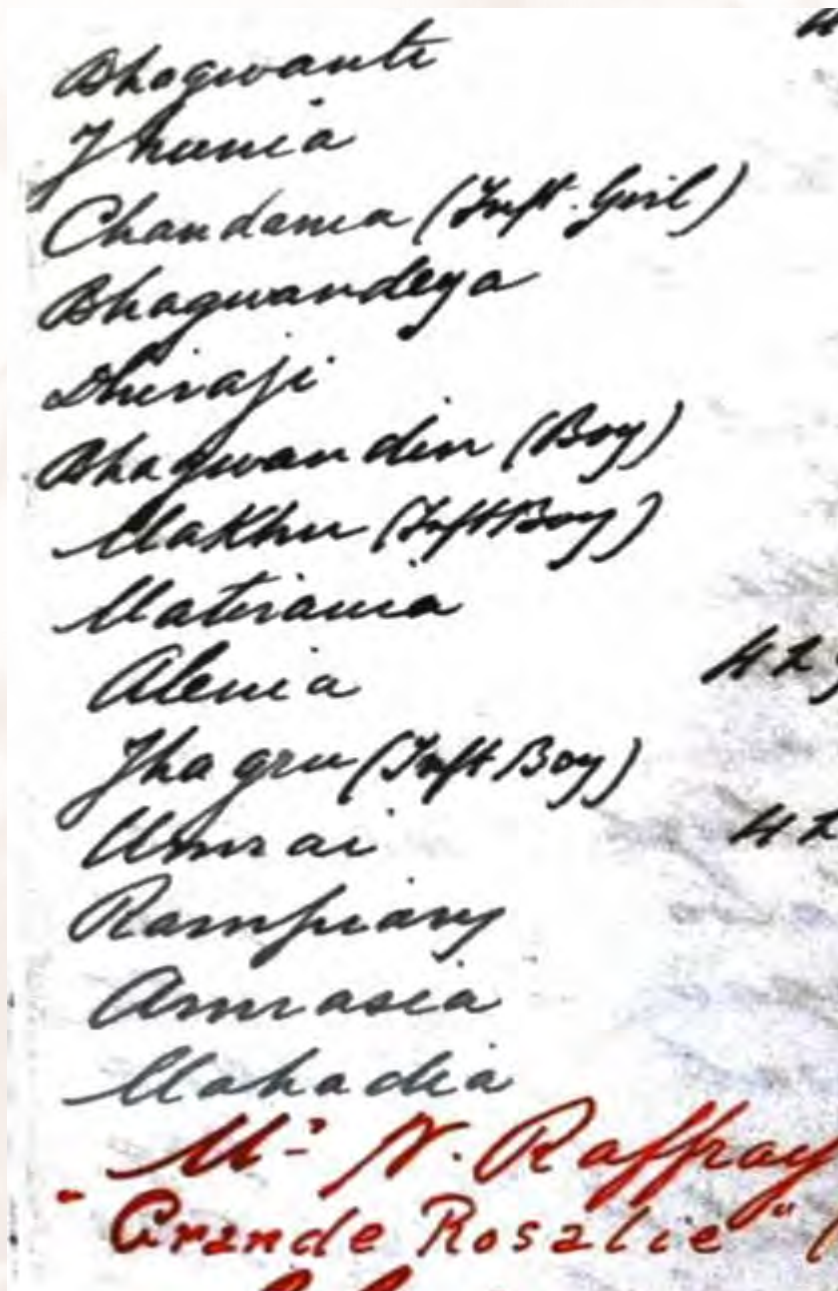
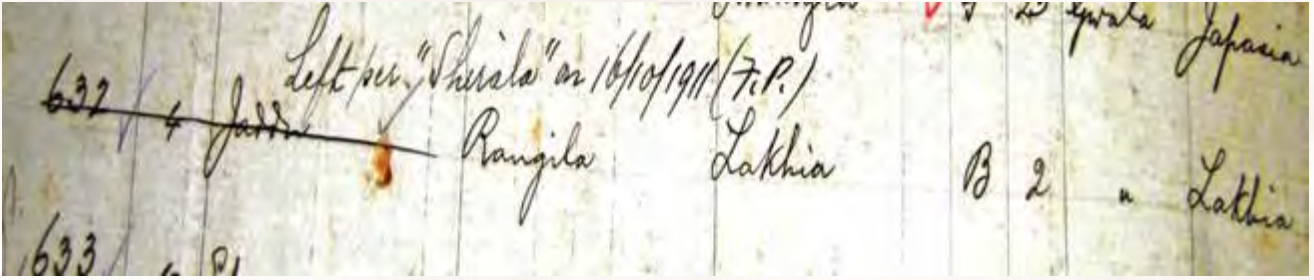


Fig 45. A group of Indian immigrant children introduced into Mauritius in 1906 from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. They were sent to work on Grande Rosalie sugar estate in Pamplemousses district.



**Fig 46.** Immigrant Jadda arrived in Mauritius at the age of 2 in August 1910 on the *Surada* with his mother and left the island about a year later.

*MGIIIA/PE Series/Courtesy of Mrs. K. Jadda-Koreemun from Calcutta, India*



**Fig 47.** Immigrant Balan arrived in Mauritius in 1910 on the ship the *Surada* at the age of 5. He was photographed at the age of 7 at the Immigration Depot in 1912.

*MGIIIA/PG & PE Series*



**Fig 48. Indian immigrant and Indo-Mauritian children with their mothers  
in Antoinette Estate Camp in Rivière du Rempart District in 1914.**

*MacMillan Mauritius Illustrated (1916)*

# Part 3

## The Free Passengers, Mauritian Contract Workers, and the Other Indentured Immigrants



*“the history of Mauritian slaves, freedmen, and indentured labourers attests to the ability of such populations to put their stamp upon the colonial plantation experience, the Mauritian case study also reminds us of the need to keep these accomplishments in perspective. We must remember, for example, that while many of the island’s Creole and Indian residents secured some measure of control over their own destinies during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many more did not....some of these immigrants and their descendants would likewise become important players on the Mauritian stage because of their ability to become gardeners of sugar in their own right.”*

Professor Dr. Richard B. Allen,  
International Historian of Indentured Labour and AGTF  
Research Consultant,  
Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers in Colonial Mauritius  
(UK, 1999)



*“The occupation and cultivation of the lands by small proprietors is extending at a rapid rate, and raises problems the solution to which is likely to be an important factor in the future economic conditions of the sugar industry or indeed the colony in general, while on the one hand a larger extent of land is brought under cultivation, the ranks of the small “Planteurs” as they are called, are mainly recruited from labourers on Sugar Estates, whose engagements are expired, and who employ their savings or borrow from their money lenders, for the purpose of acquiring land on easy terms, from the larger properties which have been recently thrown on the market, and parcelled out....The Indian puts his own money and his labour and that of his family into the land, and produces canes at a cost low enough to enable him to live on the proceeds, eked out by journeyman work, and to extend his plantations. It is obvious that this process must tend to deplete the labour force available for sugar estates....A very satisfactory feature is what may be termed, **this new colonization of the Indian peasantry** is a class hitherto hardly reached by taxation, they have become considerable contributors to the local Colonial Revenue.”*

Honourable Mr. Fred Nash,  
 President of the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture, Member  
 of the Council of Government, and Sugar Estate Owner and  
 Employer of Indentured Labourers  
 ‘Agriculture and Manufacture’ Section of the  
 MNA/B6, Mauritius Blue Book, 1899.



**Fig 1a. Four Indian Free Passengers who reached Mauritian shores during 1840s and 1850s and worked as day labourers. During the 1870s and 1880s, they became engaged workers and were photographed at the Immigration Depot.**

*MGIII/PG and PE Series/*

*MNA/Z2D and RA Series*

# Chapter One

## The Free Passenger Immigrants & the Mauritian Contract Workers

Between 1826 and 1910, an estimated 151,000 free passengers or “deck passengers” reached Port Louis with the majority among them adopting Mauritius as their new home. The Indian sub-continent topped the list with around 111,740 or 74% of the free passengers. A sizeable number of around 39,620 or 26% of the free passengers (including Mauritians who travelled overseas) came from China, France, Great Britain, Africa, and different parts of the Indian Ocean and the world. <sup>1</sup> From 1826 to 1904, some 14,000 to 15,000 free passengers worked at one time or another under some type of labour contract, generally for a period of 12-months, which was renewed each year. The free immigrants were not confined to sugar estates; they found employment in Port Louis, in the colony’s emerging towns and villages, and in the dependencies <sup>2</sup> such as Rodrigues, the Seychelles, and the other outer islands.

Pachima 15	Pondichery	Wife of and to reside with Papan. Malabar settled here.
Parvathamma 35 and a child -	do	The Wife of Sennetambo thety Malabar settled here
Ventachellou - Coll. 60 Razer	do	To reside - has his Wife Attale settled here.
Paragatanny 30 Vidyaiah	Tranquebar	To reside - Abram Semindro
Sunnasanny 24 Razer		To reside and has been here before.
Appasanny 10	Pondichery	To reside with F. J. Moutia
Chunatanny 24 Razer	ditto	To reside - Chauramo to his Brother
Niani - lathy 30	ditto	To reside - Rayro - (a mason)
Chauramo 35 Coll.	ditto	For the Service of M. Desmarais.

Fig 1b. List of Free Indian Immigrants or Indian Passengers who arrived in Mauritius on the *Jeune Laure* from Pondicherry and Tranquebar in October 1829.

MNA/Z2D Series

1. Estimated from MGIIIA, PE 1 to PE 161, Indentured Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers for 1826 to 1910; MNA, Z2D Series Volumes 1 to 188, Free Passenger and other Passengers Ship Arrival Registers for 1826 to 1911.

2. Estimated from MGIIIA, PF 1 to 74 Series, Register of Indenture Labour Contracts for 1826 to 1904; MNA, RA and RC Series, Letters and Petitions for the period between 1826 to 1904.



List of Passengers on board Ship *Fata Salem*  
from Calcutta to Mauritius

Name	Sex	Where belong	Occupation &c
<u>Cabin Passengers</u>			
Sheer Hussuff Ally	Male 45 years.	Calcutta	Medical Officer in charge Emigrants
Abdool Curreem	" 29 years.	"	Apt <sup>o</sup> to the above
<u>Deck Passengers</u>			
Mayhal	Male	Gouckpore	Labourer
Musile	10241	Arrah	Do
Edun	10242	Gya	Do
Gamree	10243	Arrah	Do
Leellashur	10244	Ghazepore	Do
Amundun	10245	Fuzerabad	Do
Bundhoo	10246	Gouckpore	Do
Gopull	10247	Arrah	Do
Butto	10248	Manghji	Do
Hajiv	Female	"	"

Fig 2a. The list of arrival of Cabin and Deck Passengers from Calcutta in July 1873, who paid their own passages to Mauritius. They were Bengali and Bihari Free Indians and were mainly labourers.

MNA/Z2D Series

Durban, Port Natal

23<sup>rd</sup> March 1840

# List of Coolie Passengers

per Manque Suffolk Young, Master  
Natal to Mauritius

Name	Number.	Also 2 Indians belonging to Mauritius
Ramdoos	4185 ✓	
Kistapan +	1834 ✓	30. m. Calé Peter Bagchus
Rammasamy 4405	2912 ✓	36. m. Fenchung Miran Sarma
Mootharasamy +	2436 ✓	0 4401
Valen 4408	4840 ✓	and 3 children
Chellee x	4841 ✓	
Baduchellum 4404	4842 ✓	
Thumiah x	1493 ✓	
Momesamy +	4295 ✓	

Fig 2b. Former Tamil indentured labourers and their families arriving in Mauritius as Free Passengers from Durban, Natal, South Africa in 1870.

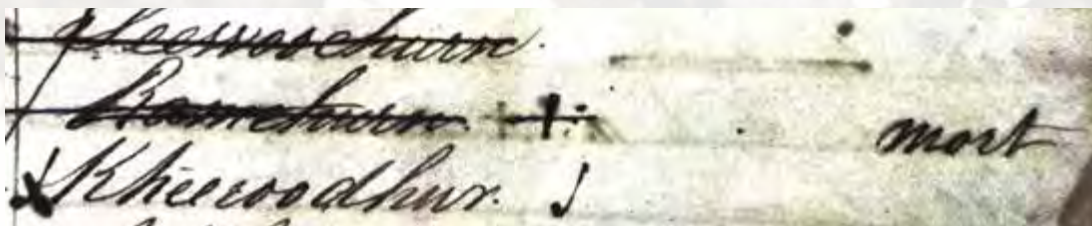
MNA/Z2D Series



**Fig 3. Rungaly arrived in Mauritius from Calcutta in 1838. More than 43 years later, he was still working and when he was photographed at the Immigration Depot.**

*MGIII/PH series / MNA/Z2D Series / Courtesy of Mrs. R. Rungali-Dabee*

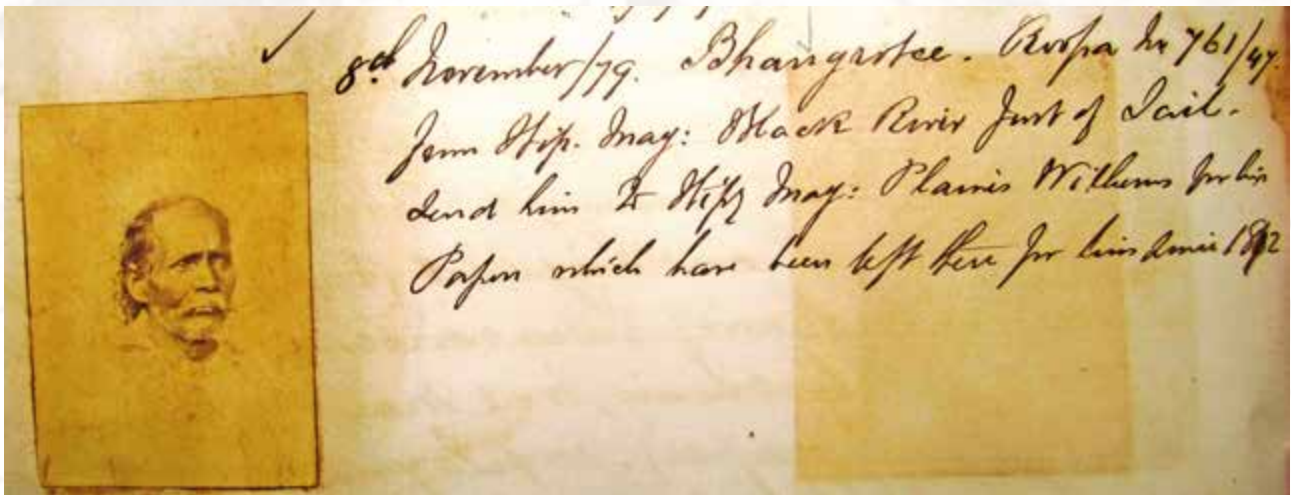
The free Indian immigrants, unlike the indentured Indian labourers, were allowed to come to Mauritius without a contractual labour agreement. However, they had to pay when they embarked even if they accompanied relatives engaged as indentured labourers travelling on indenture ships bound for Mauritius Indian from ports either at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Pondicherry, Cochin, Tanquebar, Cuddalore, Karikal or Surat. Besides incurring expenses for their passages that usually cost two to three pounds sterling, they were required to bring their own rations representing an additional cost of more than one pound.



**Fig 4. Kheeroodhur, a Free Indian Immigrant, was assigned number 1960 upon his arrival in Mauritius in January 1844. He came with his daughter Motree who was an indentured child immigrant. He worked on a 12-month contract as a labourer on Mapou Sugar Estate. The contract bears his mark.**

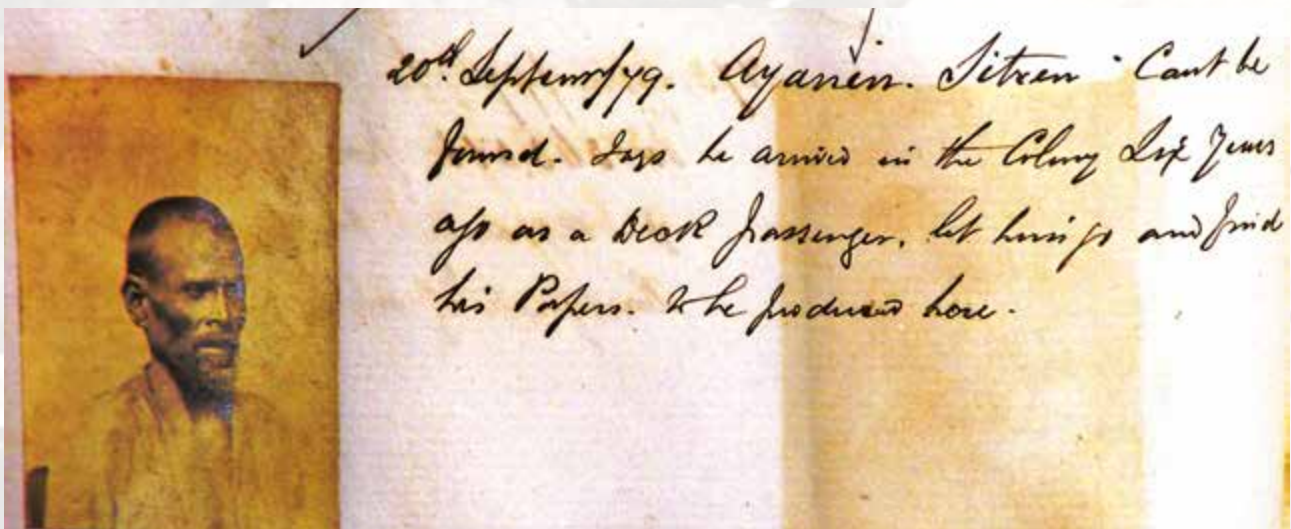
*AGTFC, Labour Employment List from Mapou Sugar Estate/  
Courtesy of A. R. Teerbhoohan*

Upon their arrival in Port Louis, the Indian deck passengers were registered at the Port Harbour Office which fell under the control of the Police Department in Port Louis. Unlike the indentured labourers, they did not pass through His Majesty's Customs House. They were issued an identification number comprising the free immigrant's passenger list number and the year of his or her arrival, the two numbers were usually divided with a slash. The number they were assigned became an inherent part of their Mauritian identity between the late 1820s and early 1900s which is comparable to the present-day Mauritian national identification card.



**Fig 5. Bhangrotee arrived in Mauritius from Calcutta in 1847 and was provided with the passenger list No.761/47. In 1879, more than 32 years later, he was arrested as a vagrant because he did not have his identification papers. His name was recorded with the same number. He was photographed at the Immigration Depot in November 1879.**

*MGIII/PH series /MNA/Z2D Series / Courtesy of Mr. K. Bhagrotee*



**Fig 6. Ayanin Sitren arrived from Madras in 1873 and worked as a labourer. Six years later, he was arrested as a vagrant because he had lost his papers which he produced a few days later. He was photographed at the Immigration Depot in September 1879.**

*MGIII/PH series /MNA/Z2D Series*



Fig 7. The Certificate of Arrival of Parawatta, Free Passenger, issued by the Port Harbour Office, bearing the passenger list No.3374/86. She arrived in Mauritius as a young girl in 1886.

Courtesy of the Late Monseigneur Amédée Nagapen and Indo-Mauritian Catholic Association

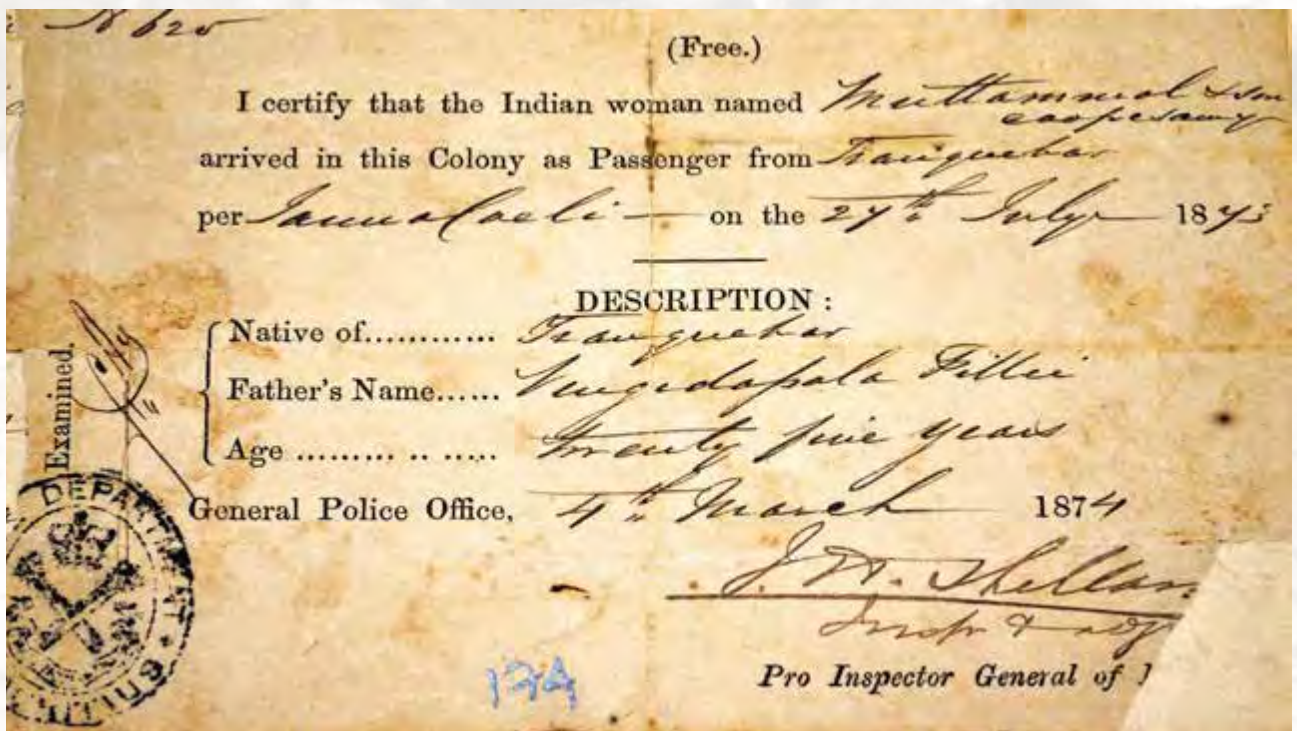


Fig 8. The Certificate of Arrival of Muttamnoul, a 25 year old Free Indian Passenger, and her son Anamana, from Tranquebar, India, in March 1874. She was issued the number No.625/74.

MNA/Z2D Series

As part of the formalities, each free immigrant was required to deposit ten pounds sterling as financial security to obtain a residence permit for twelve months. The deposit was paid into the local government savings bank through the Police Department. However, this could also be effected by their employers on production of a copy of their contracts or proof of employment. The financial security was refunded to the employer or the free immigrant after twelve months, when the contract expired and the residence permit had to be renewed.

**Port Louis,**

**Mauritius**

**RETURN of Passengers arrived on board** *the ship Fathe Salam* **Captain** *A* **1873.**  
**from** *Calcutta 15 June 1873* **, with a crew of** *38* **men, all included**

**DECLARATION OF PASSENGERS**

Name	Age	Profession or Trade	Where born	Passports by what Authority signed	Money for the Voyage and for period residence required	Name of Person to whom recommended	REMARKS
<p><i>Not annexed to the Return -</i></p> <p><i>The seven sick Indian Passengers and the coolies were landed on the 19<sup>th</sup> July at the Quarantine Station - Cannonier Point</i></p>							

**Fig 9. The ship register showing the arrival of Free Passengers and Indian Indentured workers on the *Fathe Salam* from Calcutta. They were placed on Quarantine at Flat Island for 40 days between June and July 1873. Afterward, they were landed and examined at the Pointe aux Cannoniers Quarantine Station.**

*MNA/Z2D Series*

Authorization to issue a residential permit was the sole prerogative of the Governor. Requests for a residence permit had to be channelled through the Office Assistant Colonial Secretary to the Colonial Secretary who would forward them to the Governor for ratification. However, the 1877 Ordinance abolished the financial security requirement for the free passengers arriving into the colony. This led to a sharp rise in the number of free Indian passengers coming to Mauritian shores between the late 1870s and early 1900s.

*Sinnireassa Naik / Indian / 6 October 1847*

*In answer to your petition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> September last, praying for the usual leave of residence in the Colony, having arrived here from Tranquebar on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 1846 as a passenger / granted / on furnishing security at the Police.*

*Subt to Police* *1 Sig<sup>y</sup> J Smith*  
*Adj. Col Secy*

**Fig 10. Sinnireassa Naik arrived as a Free Passenger from Tranquebar in March 1846. He applied for permanent residence in October 1847. The same month, it was granted by Governor Gomm.**

*MNA/RB Series*

The Indian Samy 5 September 1847.  
 Referring to your application of our date, praying, as you arrived  
 here in April last from Pondicherry with your wife and children,  
 that you may be allowed to remain in the Colony, I have been directed  
 to inform you that, until you shall have satisfactorily explained how  
 you intend to employ yourself, your application cannot be taken  
 into consideration.

(Sig<sup>o</sup>) J. Smith  
 App<sup>t</sup>: Gov<sup>r</sup>: Sec<sup>y</sup>?

Dup<sup>t</sup>: to Police. —

**Fig 11.** Samy arrived as a Free Passenger along with his wife and several children from Pondicherry in April 1846. He applied for permanent residence in September 1847. It was granted to him by Governor Gomm the same month.

*MNA/RB Series*

Arnapeu Sakenger Bon'Espoir/and on 14.9.74 9.1.75 II

**Fig 12a.** Arnapeu arrived in Mauritius as a Free Indian Passenger from southern India and worked as a labourer on Bon Espoir Sugar Estate in Rivière du Rempart in 1874 and 1875.

*MGIII/PO Series*



**Fig 12b.** Sinnesamy arrived in Mauritius as a Free Indian Passenger from Pondicherry in 1880 at the age of 40.

His passenger list number was No.3456/80. He worked as a skilled day labourer on Médine sugar estate. By the early 1900s, he became a head artisan on the aforementioned estate.

He was photographed in 1909 at the age of 70 at the Immigration Depot.

*MGIII/PG and PF Series /  
 MNA/Z2D/RA Series*

# VISUALIZING THE PAST

## From Free Passenger to Contract Worker: The Case Study of Immigrant Peerthum (Peertum)

A number of free Indian immigrants worked either as day labourers or as “engaged labourers” on one-year contracts on the sugar estates. Despite their status, free immigrants, were subjected to colonial labour regulations. They were arrested and prosecuted like the other Indian indentured workers for desertion, vagrancy and non-fulfillment of their contractual obligations or leaving the sugar estates without their employers’ permission.

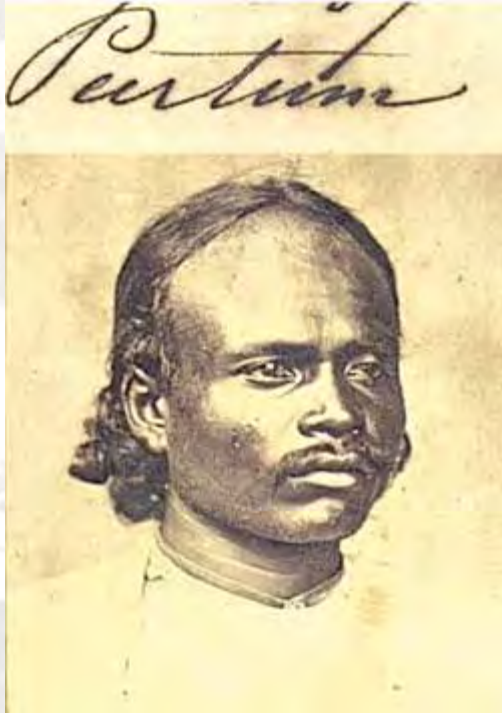
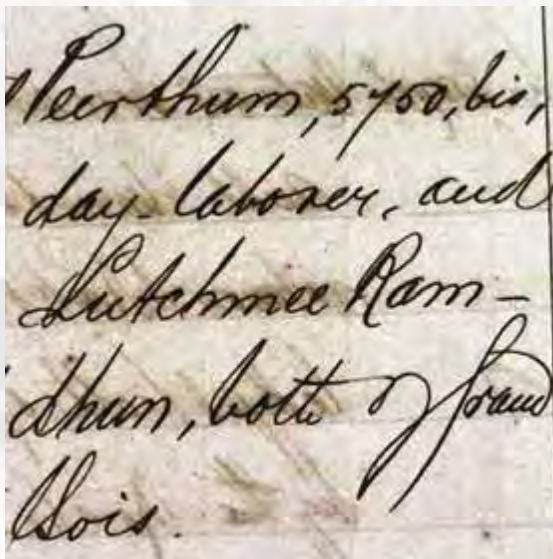


Fig 13a. Peerthum 5750 (bis), a Bihari from Arrah district, arrived in Mauritius as a Free Passenger from Calcutta in the 1870s. He paid for his own passage.

Between the 1870s and early 1900s, he worked as a day labourer on Grand Bois Sugar Estate in the district of Savanne and later, in the 1890s and early 1900s, as an engaged labourer on Grande Retraite sugar estate in Flacq. He was photographed in 1892 at the Immigration Depot at the age of 46.

MGIIIA/PG and PF Series & MNA/Z2D Series



13b. Civil Status Office document mentioning Peerthum, a day labourer, and Lutchmee Ramdhun residing together at Grand Bois in 1886. CSO/Courtesy of S. Peerthum

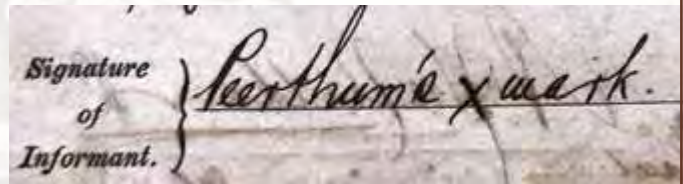
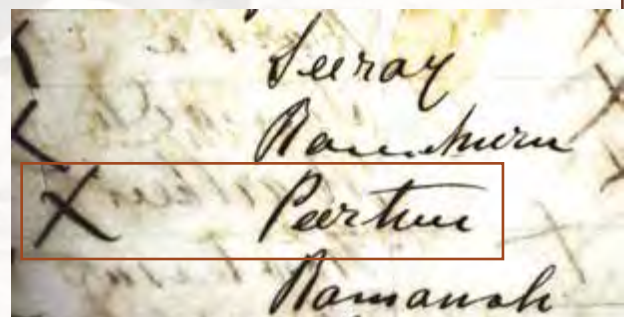


Fig 13c. Peerthum’s mark when he went to register his third child, Seesurrin Peerthum, in 1886 in the district of Flacq. CSO



13d. The marks of Peerthum and three Indian contract workers, Seeray, Ramchurn, and Ramanah, on Grande Retraite in 1892.

MGIIIA/PF Series



Name and Surname, Age and Place of Birth.	Sex.	Profession and Residence.	Whether Married, a Widower or Widow.
Peerthum 5750 (bis), Fifty nine years India (Calcutta)	male	Engaged laborer, Grande Retraite Estate	Single

Fig 14a. Peerthum 5750 (bis) passed away at the age of 59 on Grande Retraite Sugar Estate in 1905. CSO/Courtesy of S.Peerthum

**Certified Extract of a Death Entry**  
(Pursuant to the Civil Status Act 1981)

*Extrait Certifié du Certificat de Décès*  
(Conformément aux dispositions de la loi de 1981 régissant l'Etat Civil)

<b>Registration District</b> District de l'enregistrement	Flacq	<b>Certificate Number</b> Numero du Certificat	559
<b>Registration Office</b> Bureau de l'enregistrement	Centre de Flacq	<b>Date of Registration</b> Date de déclaration	01/05/1905
<b>Registered by</b> Enregistré par	Cape Joseph Wilfrid		

**DECEASED - DEFUNT(E)**

<b>Surname</b> Nom	Peerthum 5750 (Bis)	<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms			
<b>Occupation</b> Profession	Labourer Laboureur		
<b>Address</b> Adresse	Grande Retraite Estate		
<b>Marital Status</b> Situation familiale	Single Célibataire	<b>Date and Time of death</b> Date et heure du décès	30/04/1905 11:00
<b>Religion</b> Religion	Hindu Hindou	<b>Sex</b> Sexe	M - Male/Masculin
<b>Place of Birth</b> Lieu de naissance	India (Calcutta)	<b>Age</b> Age	59 Year(s)/An(s)
<b>Place of Death</b> Lieu de décès	Grande Retraite Estate		
<b>Place of Burial/Cremation</b> Lieu d'inhumation/ d'incinération			

**SPOUSE - CONJOINT(E)**

<b>Surname</b> Nom		<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms			

**FATHER - PERE**

<b>Surname</b> Nom	Cartick	<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms			

**MOTHER - MERE**

<b>Surname</b> Nom	Dannoo	<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms			

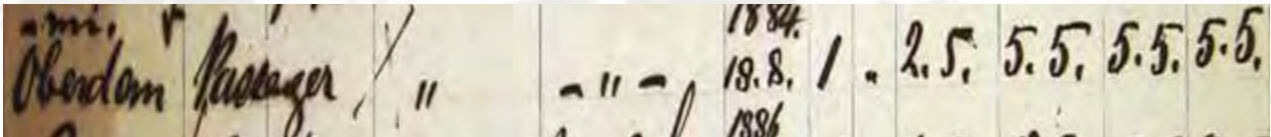
Fig 14b. The CSO document concerning Peerthum 5750 (bis) showing the names of his father and mother and other relevant details. CSO

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, free immigrants skilled or semi-skilled workers, small landowners, sharecroppers or metayers, independent vegetable cultivators, small planters, hawkers, shopkeepers, merchants and traders in Port Louis and in the towns and villages, and in the vicinity of sugar estates. A very negligible number worked and lived on Sugar estates.



**Fig 15. Veerapen Naiken, a Free Indian Passenger, worked as a labourer under a 12-month contract, on Saint Hubert Sugar Estate in Grand Port District in 1886 and 1887. He was arrested and imprisoned for desertion.**

*MGIIIA/PO Series*



**Fig 16a. Oberdom, a Free Indian Passenger, who worked as a labourer under a 12-month contract on Saint André sugar estate in the Pamplemousses district during the 1870s and 1880s. In 1885 and 1886, he was arrested and imprisoned for desertion on two different occasions.**

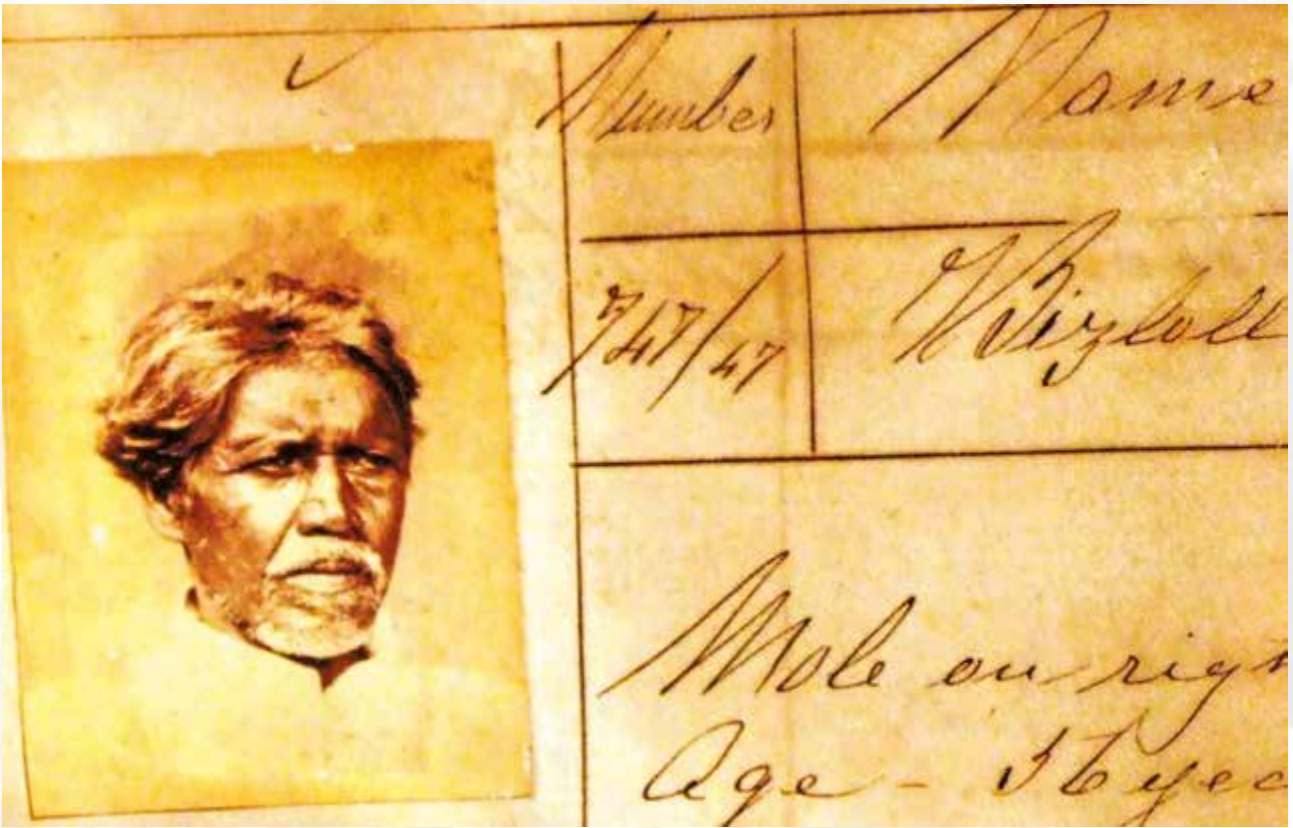
*MGIIIA/PF and PO Series*

Free Indian immigrants or passengers, such as Bizloll and Ghilaza, made significant contributions not only to the Mauritian sugar economy but to the local economy as well during the 19th and early 20th centuries. As they occupied important positions in the plantation hierarchy they are able to buy land and prosper through hard work and the fructification of their plots. Their lives and achievements form an integral part of the history of indentured labour and Indian immigration in colonial Mauritius.

**Fig 16b. Miriam arrived in Mauritius as a Free Indian Passenger from Bombay in 1865 at the age of 20. She was a Muslim Siddhi from Konkan district in present-day Maharashtra. During the 1860s and 1870s, she worked as a domestic in Port Louis. She was photographed in 1874 at the age of 29 at the Immigration Depot.**

*MGIIIA/PE, PF and PO Series*





**Fig 17. Bizloll arrived in Mauritius as a Free Passenger in 1847 at the age of 22. He became a sirdar, small property owner and independent vegetable cultivator. He was photographed at the age of 56 at the Immigration Depot in 1881.**

*MGIIIA/PH series/ MNA/Z2D Series / Courtesy of Mr. J. Bizlall*



**Fig 18. Ghilaza arrived in Mauritius as a Free Passenger in 1848 at the age of 10. He became a job contractor and small planter. He was photographed when he was 43 years old in 1881 at the Immigration Depot.**

*MGIIIA/PH series/ MNA/Z2D Series / Courtesy of Mrs. A. Ghilaza-Roy*

## The Mauritian Contract Workers

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, while the Indian Free Immigrants or deck passengers formed a very small segment of the island's labour population, it was the Indo-Mauritians who would gradually replace the New Immigrants on the Mauritian sugar estates. By 1861, a total of 20,209 individuals of Indian origin were born in Mauritius. The Indo-Mauritians made up 10% of the local Indian population. A decade later, in 1871, the Indians and Indo-Mauritians made up two thirds of the local colonial population. By then, two generations of Indo-Mauritians had already emerged. By 1873, the Indo-Mauritians made up more than 8% of the estate work force under 12-month contracts.

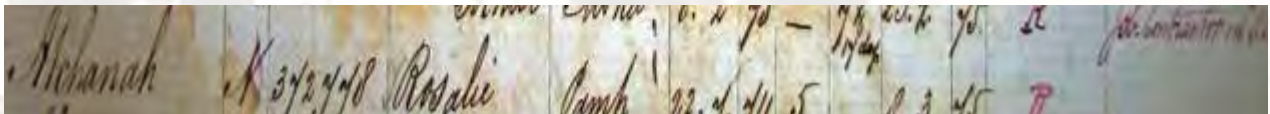


Fig 19. Allad Hoosen, an Indo-Mauritian was described as a 'Creole', worked as a job contractor on Alma Sugar Estate in Moka District in 1875.

MGIIIA/PO Series

	viene mare	H. lacy	18.5	77	1	20.7	77
● Ayassamy	do	do	14.5	77	1	24.10	77
● Arasen	do	do	15.6	77	1	19.9	77
● Amrasee	do	do	14.5	77	1	13.9	77
● Armachellum	Mon tieu	H. lacy	28.5	77	1	26.9	77
● Armoogum	Belle Vue	J. Post	8.8	77	2	16.8	77
● Appanah	La Louis	H. lacy	23.1	77	1	1.2	77
● Armagouy	Union	do	10.3	73	5	14.10	77
● Algos	Luchon	Sarant			5	15.6	77
● Abdool	Beau Bois	H. lacy	3.5	77	1	1.7	77
● Allos	Albin	P. P.					

Fig 20. Ayassamy, Armoogum and Abdool, three Indo-Mauritians, worked as labourers on three different sugar estates under 12-month contracts in 1877.

MGIIIA/PO Series

The emergence of an Indo-Mauritian Community marked a turning point in the history of indentured labour immigration on the island. The Mauritius Census of 1881 records the presence of 113,000 Indo-Mauritians descendants of the former Afro-Malagasy slaves and apprentices, constituted a minority.



**Fig 21. Babea, Coopooamy, Koderboccus and Ramdeen, four male Mauritian labourers, who worked under a 12-month labour contracts as semi-skilled workers on different sugar estates in Mauritius. They were photographed in 1888 at the Immigration Depot.**

*MGIIIA/PG and PF Series*

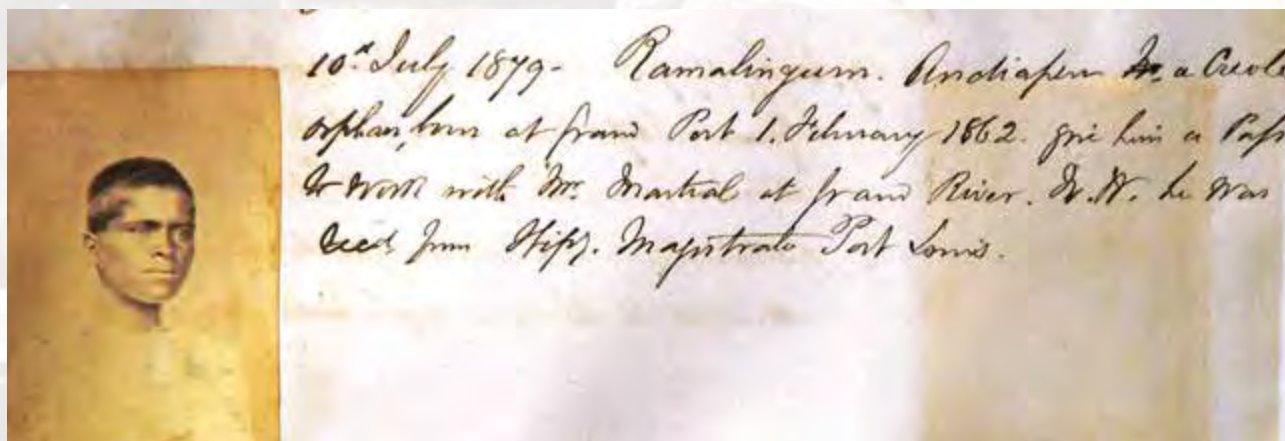
As from the 1880s, an increasing number of Mauritian labourers became “engaged” because of poverty and above all the difficulty of getting a stable job, proper housing and health care which, could they obtained on the sugar estates. Most of them were then children and grand children of indentured Indian immigrants. As they were born and they grew up in the estates camps, they were familiar with life on the sugar estate. They worked on the same plantation as their parents and grandparents to keep close to kiths and kin, and long-standing friends, which explains the social and economic solidarity and unity that have hitherto characterized Indo-Mauritian families and settlements in Mauritius.



**Fig 22. Sayanond Pierre, Periacooty, Jay Lamau, Ryamaah and Rickareea five female Mauritian workers, who worked under 12-month labour contracts doing light work on different sugar estates in Mauritius. They were photographed in 1890 at the Immigration Depot**

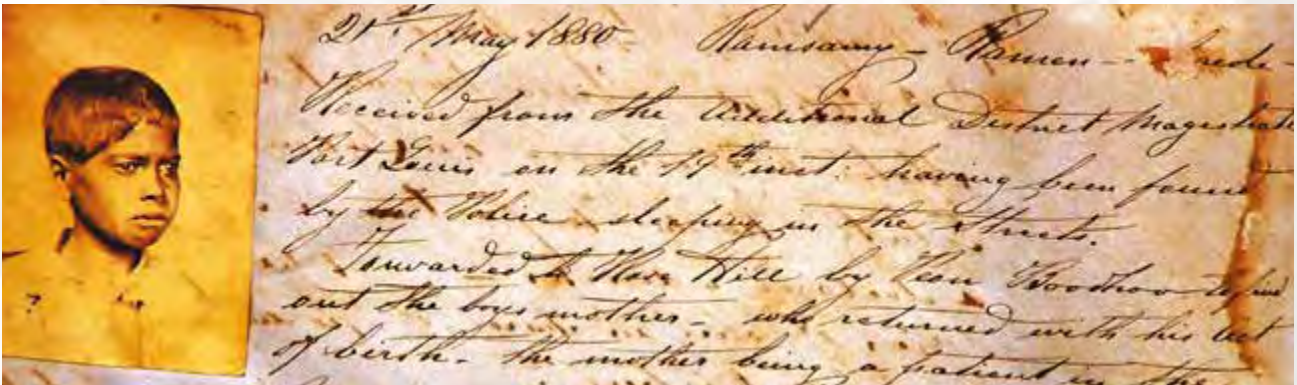
*MGIIIA/PE and PF Series*

With the dramatic increase in the number of Indo-Mauritians working on the sugar plantations in the 1870s and 1880s, it is also very common for them to be arrested and convicted as deserters and vagrants under the labour and vagrancy laws. Indo-Mauritians received almost the same treatment that was inflicted upon the Indian indentured labourers although they had been in the colony for almost two generations and constituted an important segment of the Mauritian colonial society.



**Fig 23. Ramalingum Andiapien, the son of Immigrant Andiapien, was an Indo-Mauritian. He was born in 1862 on a sugar estate in the Grand Port District. In the 1870s, he worked as a labourer in Grand Port and Port Louis. In 1879, Ramalingum was arrested as a vagrant and sent to work as a labourer on the estate of Mr. Martial at Grand River North West under a 12-month contract.**

*MGIIIA/PH and PF Series*



**Fig 24. Ramsamy Ramen, the son of Immigrant Ramen, was born in 1868 on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate in the Rivière du Rempart District. He was an Indo-Mauritian. In 1880, Ramsamy was arrested as a vagrant in Port Louis and sent to the Orphan Asylum as an orphan. Five years later, he was sent to work on the sugar estate where he was employed as a young skilled labourer under a 12-month contract.**

*MGHIA/PH and PF Series*

The period extending from 1860s to the early 1900s was characterized by a new trend among the labouring class. A relatively important movement of population, namely Indo-Mauritians, took place. The Indo-Mauritians started leaving the sugar estates and were gradually gravitating towards the newly established villages, the towns and Port Louis. In 1871, more than 33% of the Indo-Mauritians lived in the villages, towns and some in Port Louis, and three decades later, at the dawn of the 20th century, over 60% lived off the sugar plantations although they continued to work on or maintain some economic links to the estates <sup>3</sup>.

The last decades of the indenture period witnessed the emergence of a class of semi-skilled and skilled workers and small landowners among Indo-Mauritians. They became vegetable cultivators, small sugar planters and were also engaged in trade and commerce and achieved some measure of social and economic mobility. Like the Free Indian Immigrants or deck passengers, they indubitably made an important contribution to the demographic evolution and economic development of Mauritius.

3. MNA/The Mauritius Census for 1871; the Mauritius Census for 1861, 1881, 1891, 1901, and 1911.

## Chapter Two

# The Other Indentured Immigrants: The Chinese, Malagasies, Comorians, and The Liberated Africans

### A Brief Profile of the Other Indentured Immigrants

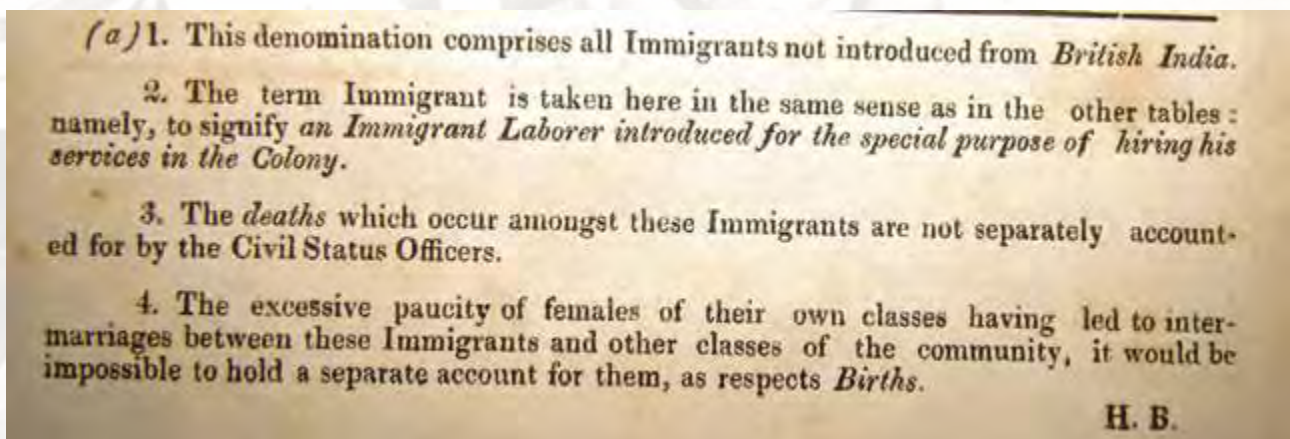


Fig 25. Non-Indian indentured labourers were contract workers who arrived in Mauritius were from countries other than British India.

MNA/ARPI

Until recently, one of the largely neglected themes of modern Mauritian historiography has been the experiences of the non-Indian indentured labourers and the Liberated Africans in 19th century and early 20th century Mauritius. Between 1829 and 1880, an estimated number of 9,855 contract workers consisting of Chinese, Malagasies, Comorians, East Africans (mainly Mozambicans) and the Liberated Africans arrived in Mauritius.



**" Foreign Immigrants " (a) registered at the Immigration Office up to the close of 1859.**

YEARS.	From Madagascar.		From Coast of Africa.		From Aden.		From the Laccadives.		Chinese.		Johannese.		TOTAL.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	Males.	Females.
1837 ..									10				10	
—39 ..	28												28	
—40 ..	325								14				339	
—41 ..	2,056								767		206		3,029	
—42 ..	730								634				1,364	
—43 ..	97								1,092				1,189	
—45 ..	20												20	
—49 ..	87	3											87	3
—51 ..	74	9											74	9
—52 ..	26	5											26	5
—53 ..									222				222	
—55 ..	18												18	75
—56 ..	96	33	309	11	402	31							807	
—57 ..							4						4	
	3,557	50	309	11	402	31	4		2,739		206		7,217	92

**Fig 26. Table 5: Statistical returns showing the number of non-Indians or other contract workers who were introduced in Mauritius between 1837 and 1857 and registered at the Immigration Office.**

*MNA/ARPI*

Yemeni, Arab Omani, Ethiopian, and Burmese contract workers and Indians who had worked and lived for several years in Yemen and Réunion Island came to Mauritius as from 1850s until the 1870s. During this period, there were also several free East African workers who went to work in different parts of the Indian Ocean World including Mauritius.

The same era saw the arrival of dozens of Siddhis or Indians of African origins, and Mozambicans who had lived and worked in India. These immigrants of such diverse origins and ethnic appurtenance boarded at more than 37 ports of embarkation in different parts of the Indian Ocean World. Between 1829 and 1879, more than 10,700 other indenture contract workers not of Indian origin reached Mauritian shores.



**Fig 27a.** Immigrant Babajee, a Siddhi originally from Thane district of present-day Maharashtra, left Bombay at the age of 40 with his two sons to work in Réunion Island in 1856.

Then, he arrived in Mauritius in 1860 as labourer. Babajee was photographed at the age of 50 in 1866 at the Immigration Depot. During the 1860s and after, he became a hawker in Port Louis.

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series/Courtesy of K. Babajee*

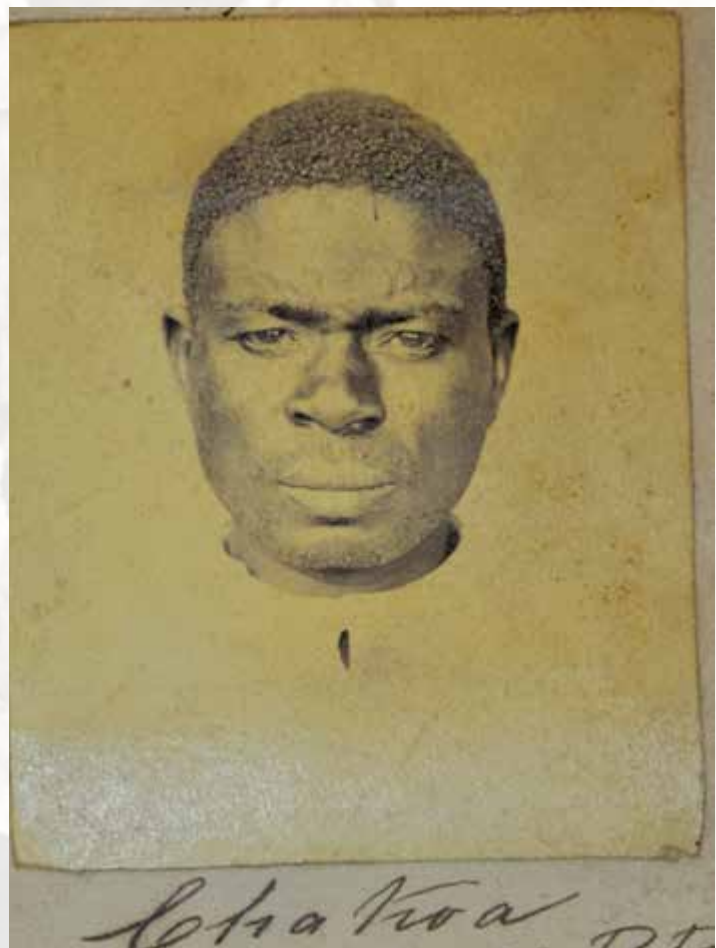
**Fig 27b.** Chakoa, a Christian Yao Mozambican indentured worker, arrived in Mauritius in 1856 at the age of 30. He was from the village of Mazani near Lake Malawi.

At a young age he left his village with his family and eventually went to work on Mozambique Island. In 1843, Chakoa worked on Nossi-be, off the coast of Madagascar, Réunion Island and then came to Mauritius.

In 1856, he became engaged for five years to Mr. Nadeau in Port Louis as a stone mason.

In 1868, Chakoa was photographed at the Immigration Depot at the age of 45 when he was registered and issued his Old Immigrant ticket. By then, he was working for the newly established Municipality of Port Louis.

*MGIIIA/PG, PE, and PH Series/ MNA/RA Series*



**Table 6: The Number of other contract workers who were landed and their Ethnicity (1829-1879) <sup>4</sup>**

1	Sinhalese indentured workers who arrived in the colony on individual contracts between 1837 and 1839	15
2	Liberated Africans who were landed between 1841 and 1869	2852
3	Chinese labourers who arrived between 1829 and 1853	3139
4	Johannese and other Comorian Labourers who were landed in 1841	206
5	Yemeni Muslim labourers from Aden who were landed in 1853 and 1856 which included 30 Arabs	468
6	Malagasy labourers who were landed between 1839 and 1856	3607
7	Siddhis originally from India and of African descent, were Muslims, settled in Aden and arrived between the 1840s and 1870s	400
8	Christian Abyssinian/Ethiopian workers who were introduced in 1853 and 1856	13
9	Burmese Buddhist labourers who arrived in 1841	7
10	Muslim workers from the Laccadives Island (located close to the Maldives) in 1857	4
11	Free East African workers who arrived in Mauritius between 1856 and 1879	20
		<b>TOTAL: 10,731</b>

The diversity of these indentured immigrants shows to what extent during the course of the 19th century, the establishment and expansion of the indentured labour system in Mauritius had a direct impact on the Indian Ocean. Most of them came to work as labourers on the sugar estates and many of them were also sent to work in Port Louis. A relatively high death rate prevailed among this segment of the immigrant population.

Many of them deserted and were arrested as vagrants for illegal absence, and desertion while they protested vehemently against their inhumane living and working conditions. Eventually, many among them returned to their countries of origin. Those who remained converted to Christianity and were able to achieve some measure of social and economic mobility.

---

4. Estimated from MGIIIA, PE 1 to PE 161, Indentured Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers for 1826 to 1910; MNA, Z2D Series Volumes 1 to 188, Free Passenger and other Passengers Ship Arrival Registers for 1826 to 1911.

**Table 7. Ports of Embarkation of Indian and the other indentured workers between 1829 and 1879<sup>5</sup>**

Ethnicity of the Indentured Immigrants & Country		Ports
1	Indians (India) including some Siddhis	Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Pondicherry, Karikal, Cuddalore, Coringa and Cochin
2	Chinese (mostly overseas Chinese with only a handful coming from the Chinese mainland)	Calcutta, Singapore, Penang and Macao
3	Mozambicans (Mozambique)	Ibo, Mozambique Island, Kilwa and Quelimane
4	Omani/Arabs (Oman)	Muscat
5	Yemeni/Arabs (Yemen) including some Siddhis and Yemenis whose ancestors came from India	Aden
5	Malagasies (Madagascar)	Tamatave, Fort Dauphin, Nossi-Be/Nosiphalee, Sainte Marie, Angontsy, Maraset, St. Augustine Bay, Matsikora, Mora, Vola Massa, Foule Pointe, and Manahar
6	Comorians & Johannese (Comoro Islands: Grande Comoro and Johanna)	Moya in Anjouan and Moheli in Grande Comoro
7	Sinhalese (Ceylon or present-day Sri Lanka)	Colombo
8	Abyssinians (Ethiopians) (Abyssinia/modern-day Ethiopia)	Massawah
9	Liberated Africans (Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Madagascar and Comoro Islands)	Tamatave, Fort Dauphin, Nossi-Be, Sainte Marie, Angontsy, Maraset, Foule Pointe, and Manahar; Ibo, Mozambique Island, Kilwa, Quelimane, Stonetown in Zanzibar; Moya and Moheli; Port Victoria in the Seychelles before being transferred to Mauritius
10	Burma	Rangoon
11	Laccadivians (Laccadive Islands)	Cochin, India
		<b>TOTAL: 37 Ports of Embarkation located in 16 different countries in the greater Indian Ocean World</b>

5. MGIIIA, PE 1 to PE 161, Indentured Immigrant Ship Arrival Registers for 1826 to 1910; MNA, Z2D Series Volumes 1 to 188, Free Passenger and other Passengers Ship Arrival Registers for 1826 to 1911.

# The Chinese Indentured Labourers

Chinese immigration to Mauritius dates back to roughly around 1826. An estimated number of 3,139 male Chinese indentured labourers arrived in Mauritius between 1826 and 1853. Hayme, a well known Chinese merchant and one of the leaders of the fledgling Chinese community based in Port Louis, brought five “workmen” to work under contract in his business in Port Louis. They arrived on board the *Belle Alliance* from Singapore in 1826.

NAMES, Age, Profession or Trades. Where born.	Passports, by what Authority signed and for what destination originally granted.
Sabraha (Jassin)	
Hayme, a Chinaman.	
Whampoa	
Kankoo	
Hoquien	
Kachhind	
Ahim	

Fig 28. Hayme, a Chinese businessman, and his five contract workmen arrived in Mauritius in December 1826.

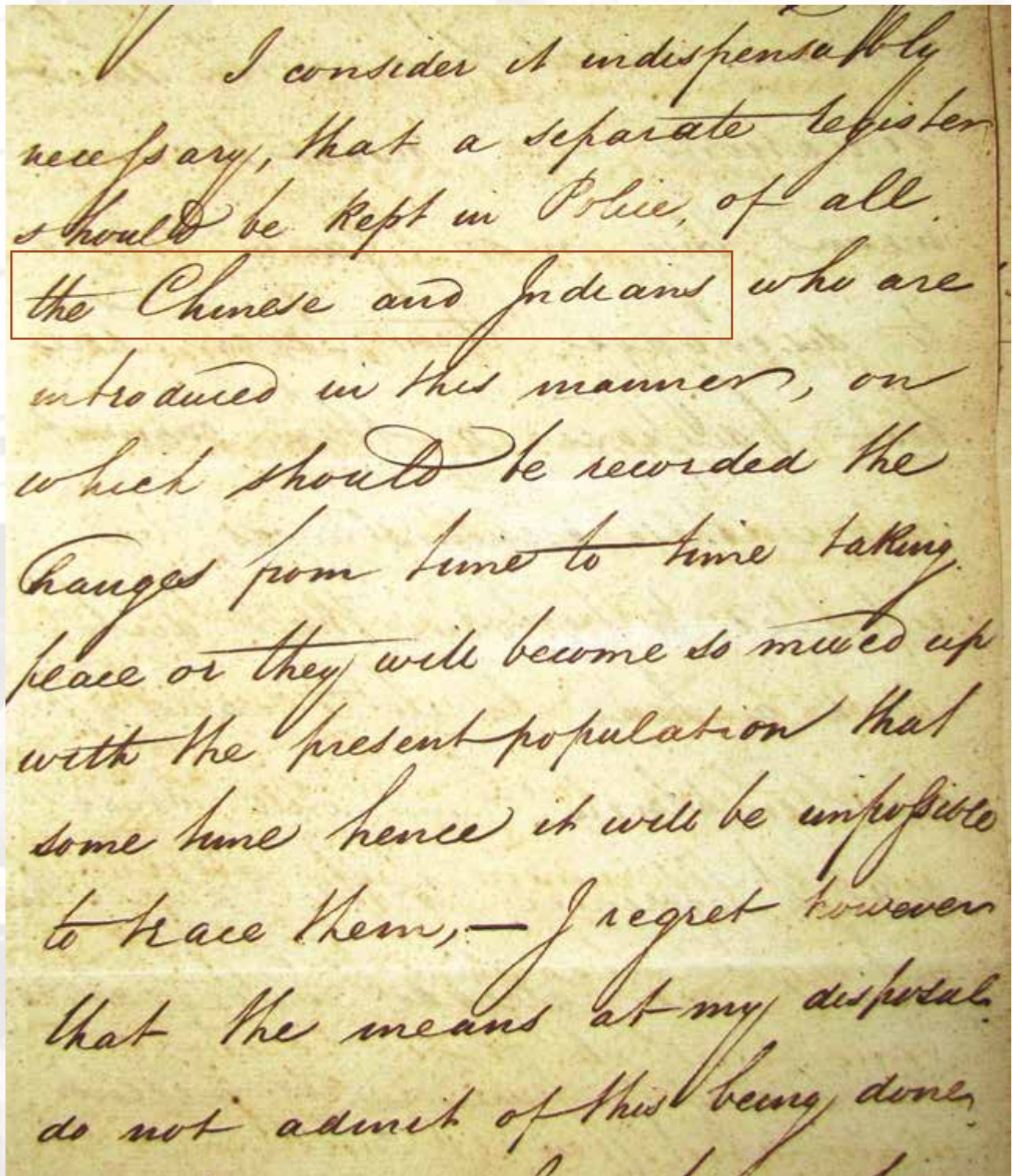
MNA/Z2D Series

NAMES, Age, Profession or Trades. Where born.	Passports, by what Authority signed and for what destination originally granted.	Motives of the voyage, or duration of temporary or permanent residence in the Colony.	Recommendations with names of Persons willing to become security for good conduct, &c.	Particulars and names of equipment in the Colony independently of trade or profession.	REMARKS
Two Hundred and forty nine Chinese Mechanics and Labourers.			Supd Gallardon Supd Thomas		vide reference to Government dated 28th July, respecting three arrived by the "Lauridian" See * Has been employed in 30/7/29

Fig 29. The arrival of 249 of the 398 Chinese indentured labourers and mechanics or skilled workers on board the *Sir Francis Charlotte* on 29th July 1829.

MNA/Z2D Series

On 27th and 29th July 1829, around 398 Chinese contract workers arrived from Singapore via Calcutta. However, within less than three months of their arrival, they refused to work and accept the inhumane living and working conditions. They left their employers and went to look for better living and working conditions in Port Louis where they were arrested as deserters and vagrants. By the early 1830s, the majority of the Chinese indentured workers were repatriated to their ports of embarkation.



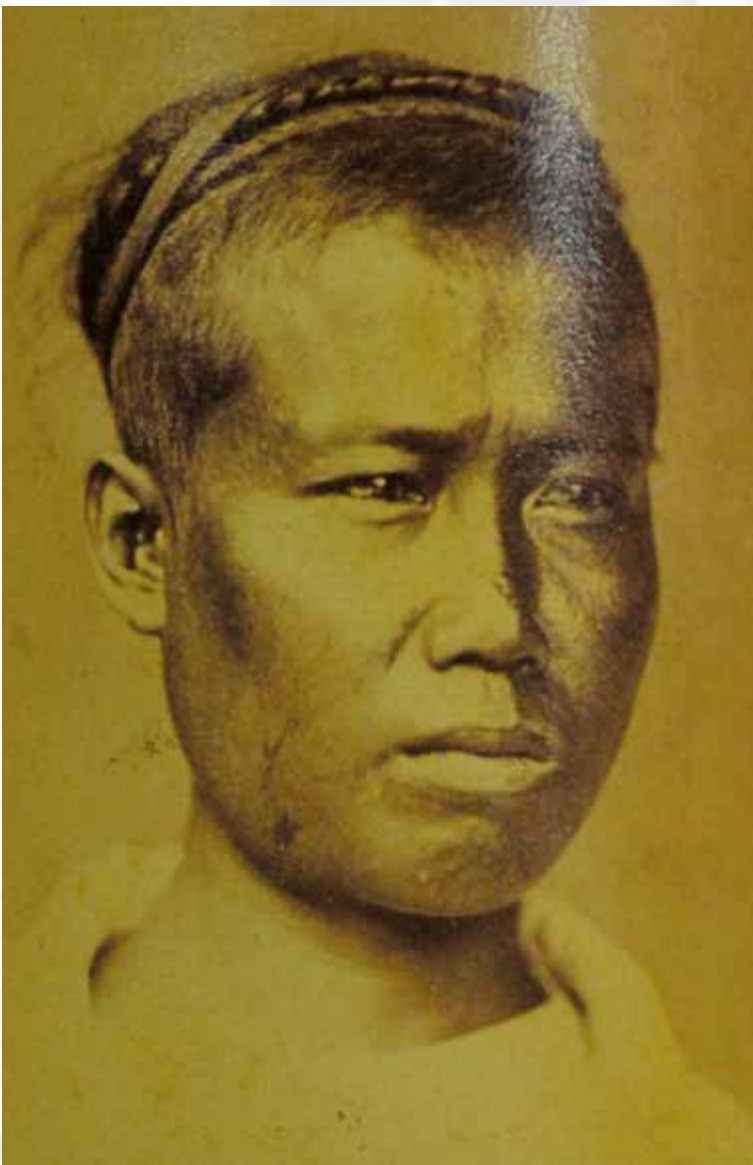
I consider it indispensably necessary, that a separate register should be kept in Police, of all the Chinese and Indians who are introduced in this manner, on which should be recorded the changes from time to time taking place or they will become so mixed up with the present population that some time hence it will be impossible to trace them, — I regret however that the means at my disposal do not admit of this being done.

Fig 30. The Observations of John Finiss, Chief Commissary of Police, on the introduction of indentured Chinese and Indian labourers in 1829.



Fig 31. Ship Register showing the arrival of Chinese indentured labourers in Mauritius from Calcutta in 1837.

MNA/PE Series



Chinese settlement in Mauritius began in the 1840s when thousands of Chinese indentured immigrants reached Mauritian shores and dozens among them, like Assene, decided to adopt it as their new home. Immigrant Assene a skilled worker from Macao arrived in Mauritius from Penang in 1841. He was then 33 years old, and a Buddhist like many of his compatriots. After having spent ten years in Penang, he emigrated to Mauritius and worked as a carpenter on a one-year contract.

Fig 32. Assene, a Chinese indentured labourer, was 57 years old when he was photographed as a vagrant at the Immigration Depot in 1865. He was one of the few Chinese indentured workers to be imprisoned at the Vagrant Depot.

MGIIIA/PG and PE/  
MNA/RA Series

Eventually, Assene engaged to work for Mr. Chapman, a British merchant, on a 12-month labour contract in Port Louis. As he was single and things worked out well, Assene decided to settle in Mauritius where he worked for many years. In the 1860s, he opened his own small workshop in Royal Street with the help of a Chinese merchant.

In 1870, he was intercepted by the police in the centre of Port Louis because he had lost his identification papers and he was required to obtain a new one in accordance with the Labour Law of 1867. Within a week, Assene was able to procure a new immigrant ticket from the Immigration Department.

July 5<sup>th</sup> 1841  
Examination of Chinese laborers  
arrived from Penang on the "Junges" through the interpretation of  
Assene who speaks English  
Assene Born at Macao 33 years of age -  
Carpenter, unmarried; About 10 years at  
Penang; came here to work as a Carpenter  
Wages 12 Dollars per month; 75 pounds  
Rice and 12 pounds of Beef and some  
Salt - no clothing - engaged for one  
Year. could not find sufficient work  
at Penang is the reason he came here.  
Did not go to Police

Fig 33. The Statement of Assene, a Chinese indentured immigrant, to John Finiss, Chief Commissary of Police upon his arrival from Penang in July 1841.

MNA/RA Series



## The Malagasy Contractual Workers

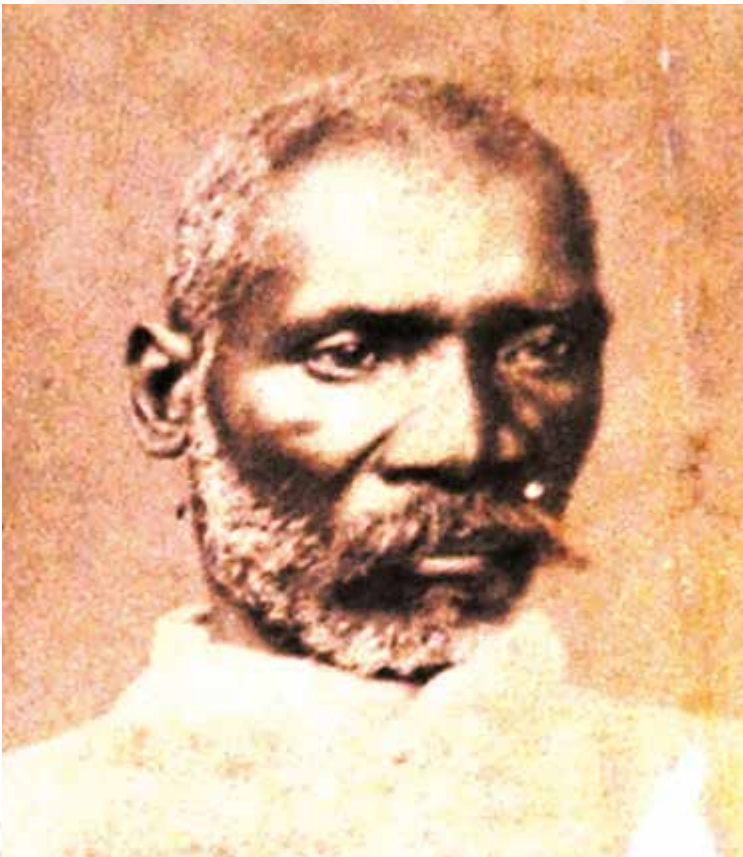
Madagascar had been one of the most important sources of labour, especially unfree labour through forced displacement of people since the foundation of the Colony. The establishment of the indenture system in Mauritius radically changed the system and between 1839 and 1856, around 3607 Malagasy indentured workers, 3557 males and 50 females arrived voluntarily in Mauritius. They came mainly from the eastern, central and north-western parts of Madagascar and included such notable local tribals as the Antanosy, Antamboly, Merina, Tamboly, Sakalava, and the Betsimisarakas.

*Nominal List of Malagasy Immigrants*

<i>Register No.</i>	<i>Name of the Immigrants</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Cast</i>	<i>Former Employment</i>	<i>Name of the Father</i>
	<i>Atianoinana</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>Malagache</i>	<i>Sabourea</i>	<i>Peemaha</i>
	<i>Botolera</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Gheelatake</i>
	<i>Botosehe</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Perranran</i>
	<i>Liny</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Deurape</i>
	<i>Karoba</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Chimanantra</i>
	<i>Manontania</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Laymaroak</i>
	<i>Atsinaneta</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Sindafatch</i>
	<i>Soota</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Mahalooba</i>
	<i>Maratiba</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Sakameel</i>
	<i>Matiky</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Kerlanta</i>
	<i>Pianalouan</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Masetkoa</i>
	<i>Atitaroa</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Traba</i>
	<i>Atitandrasana</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>Tanchorak</i>

Fig 34. Malagasy indentured labourers who arrived in Mauritius from the port town of Noseephalee in 1841.

MGHIA/PE Series



Among the thousands of Malagasy indentured workers who arrived in Mauritius in the mid-nineteenth century, over 1,800 Malagasy men, women and children Mauritius as their new home, such as Immigrants Mandrandra and Tassy.

**Fig 35. Mandrandra, a Malagasy indentured labourer, was photographed as a vagrant at the age of 57 at the Immigration Depot in 1873.**

*MGIIIA/PG/PE Series*

Mandrandra was 25 years old when he landed in Mauritius, together with his brother in 1841. He was a Christian pertaining to the Merina ethnic group who inhabit the high plateau of Madagascar. Mandrandra was labourer from the port of Angontsy where he had two wives and two children. He came to serve a one year contract as a semi-skilled worker which was renewed annually. In 1849, he returned to Madagascar but came back to settle on the island with his family as they fled persecution from the regime of Queen Ranaivalon. Between 1849 and 1865, Mandrandra worked as a skilled metalworker in workshops on different sugar estates in the districts of Moka and Plaines Wilhems under one-year contracts.

Mandrandra. A native of Angontsy brother to the farmer. aged 25 or 30 has two wives and two children came here of his own free will and accord to work and will remain one year. expects five dollars a month Captain knows about his passage. will work with some person and his brother.

**Fig 36. The statement of Mandrandra after being questioned by the Police shortly after his arrival in Mauritius from Madagascar in 1841.**

*MNA/RA Series*



**Fig 37. Tassy, a female Malagasy Betsimisaraka Christian, was from Sainte Marie Island, located off the north east coast of Madagascar. She arrived in Mauritius in 1852 at the age of 25 and worked as a seamstress in Port Louis. She was photographed in 1870 at the age of 43 at the Immigration Depot after she had lost her immigrant ticket.**

*MGIIIA/PG, PE, and PF Series/ MNA/RA Series*

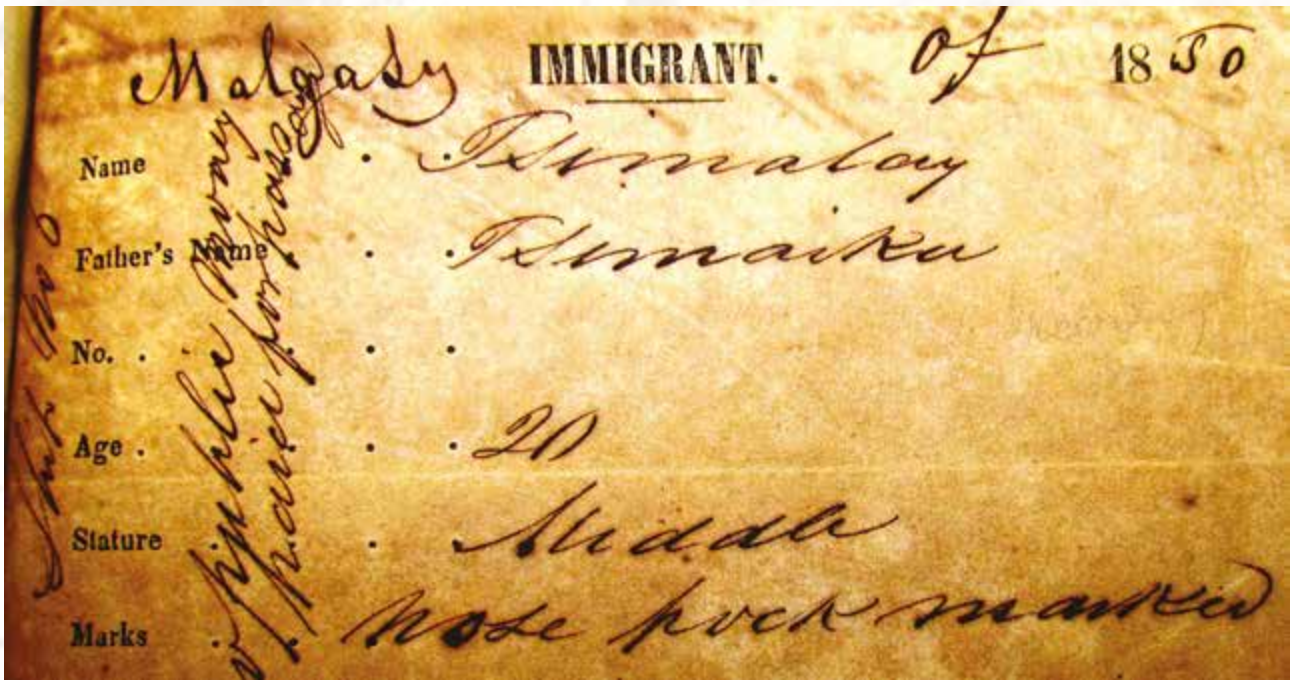
Mangoty W.	Tsirangapo	St. Marie	27
Tassy	Simpa	dr.	25

**Fig 38. The ship register showing the arrival of Tassy in Mauritius in 1852 with Mangota, her cousin from Sainte Marie. They were among the five Malagasy females who reached Mauritian shores during the course of that year. They were among only 50 female Malagasy indentured workers who were mostly Christians arrived in Port Louis between 1839 and 1856.**

*MGIIIA/PE Series*

Among the majority of the Malagasy indentured workers who worked and lived for a short period in Mauritius before returning to their native land was Immigrant Tsimalay. In 1850, Tsimalay came as a contractual worker from Taomasina or Tamatave in north east Madagascar. Within two days of his arrival, Thomy Hugon, the Protector of Immigrants, provided him with an immigrant ticket just like tens of thousands of Indian indentured workers.

Tsimalay came to work on a three-year contract as a blacksmith for Mr. Loustau, part owner of Chamouny sugar estate in Savanne district. Tsimalay was born in a village near Taomasina or Tamatave in 1830. He was a Christian and his father was Tsimaka, a dock worker.



**Fig.39a.**The Immigrant Ticket of Tsimalay, a Malagasy Indentured Labourer who arrived in Mauritius in October 1850.

*MGIIIA/PE Series*



**Fig 39b.** Mangoty, another female Malagasy Betsimisaraka Christian, was from the Sainte Marie Island near Madagascar. She arrived in Mauritius in 1852 at the age of 27 along with her cousin Immigrant Tassy. She worked as a domestic in Port Louis. She was photographed in 1871 at the age of 46 at the Immigration Depot.

*MGIIIA/PG, PE, and PF Series/  
MNA/RA Series*

## The Comorian Contract Workers

The temporary closure of the parts of Calcutta and Madras to the importation of indentured labourers to Mauritius propelled British planters and merchants to turn to the Comores archipelago (as a source of labour) for their labour supply.

In 1841, they imported 206 male Comorian workers mainly from Anjouan and a few from Grande Comore, Mayotte and Moheli. Some of them were stone masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths and had been formerly in the employment of the King of Johanna and were also known as Johannese.

202 Johannese laborers arrived 25<sup>th</sup> January 1841

*In this register the names of the laborers engaged 26 Feb 1841 for the first time in 2nd column*

Nosa	Passpt	21
Isougovo		22
Hamisy Hombo	West & Barclay's papers 26 Jan 1841 Passpt Feb	23
Hamady Osona	West Passpt	24
Bakar	" Pt	25
Mahadaly	Chapman's Pt	26
Osona Bahasona	Chapman & Barclay's Passpt	27
		28

Fig 40. A Ship Register showing the arrival of Indentured Johannese or Comorian Indentured Labourers in Mauritius in January 1841. They were introduced by West, Chapman and Barclay who were British planters and merchants.

MGIIIA/PE Series

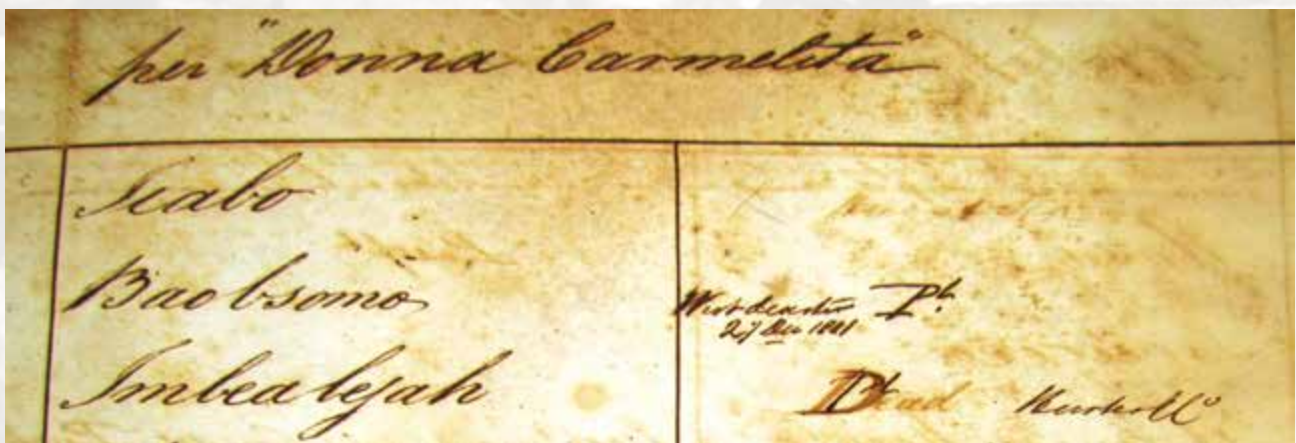
The majority of the Comorians who were introduced as indentured workers returned to their home islands by the mid-1840s. However, more than two dozen adopted Mauritius as their new country. They were skilled and semi-skilled artisans and most of them established their workshops in Port Louis, the rural areas, and even on some sugar estates. One of these Comorians was Baobosomo. He was described by one of his employers as a “gifted, dedicated, and hardworking artisan”.



**Fig 41. Baobosomo was photographed at the age of 80 at the Immigration Depot in 1901. By then, he was a well-known small landowner in the Pamplémousses district.**

*MGIIIA/PG & PE Series/MNA/RA Series*

Baobosomo, arrived in Mauritius in 1841, at the age of 20. He was a Muslim Johannese from a village on the island of Anjouan. He came to serve a one-year contract as a labourer for W.W. West on the Vale Sugar Estate in the Pamplémousses District. In December 1841, when Baobosomo left Vale Sugar Estate to visit some of his fellow Comorians on a nearby estate, just a month before his labour contract expired, he was arrested as a deserter. He was released upon the personal intervention of Mr. West. He remained on the island and continued to work on the same sugar estate for many years.



**Fig 42. The ship arrival list of Immigrant Baobosomo indicating that he worked for Mr. West. He was arrested as a deserter on 27 December 1841.**

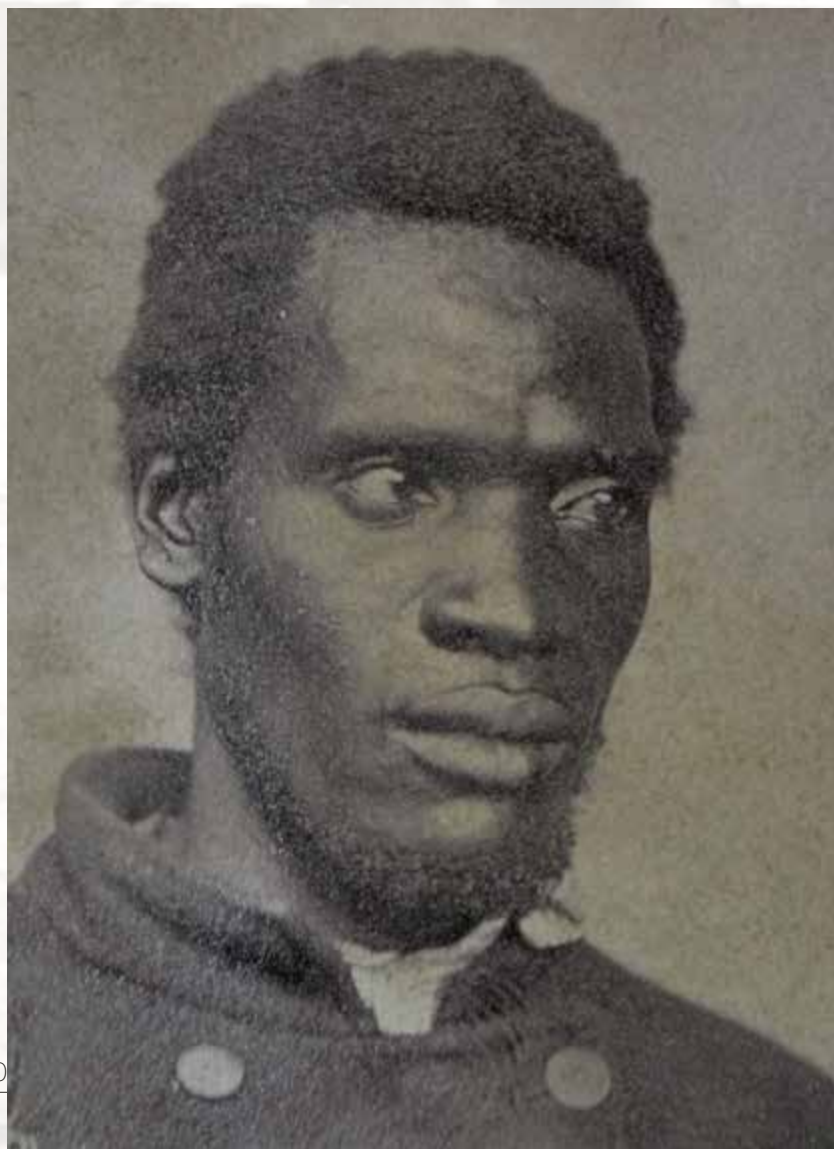
*MGIIIA/PE Series*

## The Mozambican Liberated Africans in Mauritius and the Life Story of Beatrice Soolia

Human trafficking for unremunerated labour continued clandestinely well after the slave trade and slavery were abolished in the 1910. The British Royal Navy actively patrolled the Indian Ocean and intercepted slave trading vessels to rescue the captives, and a number of them were sent to Mauritius.

Between 1841 and 1869, 2,852 Liberated Africans, 2281 males and 571 females, also known as “African Recaptives” or “free slaves”, were landed at the Immigration Depot in Port Louis. They were conveyed to Mauritius on 17 different ships which were captured by the British Royal Navy in the Western and South-Western Indian Ocean. These slave trading vessels originated from ports in Mozambique, Zanzibar, other parts of East Africa, Madagascar and the Comoro Islands.

In 1856, around 320 Mozambicans, 309 males and 11 females, reached Port Louis to work mainly on the sugar estates and some in Port Louis. They belonged to prominent and powerful ethnic groups such as the Makua, Yao, Maravi, Lomwe and Nginodo. From the 1850s to the 1870s, a dozen other Mozambican workers engaged in Mauritius on individual five-year contracts. Several Mozambicans became skilled artisans and prospered economically thereby achieved a better social status and easily integrated the Mauritian colonial society. The case-studies of Immigrants Aboodallah Langany and Jean Jacques Satala clearly illustrate this economic and social integration.



**Fig 43. Aboodallah Langany, son of Langany and a Muslim Maravy arrived in Mauritius from Ibo, Mozambique in 1856 at the age of 26. He was a captive African originally from the village of Misova near southern Lake Malawi and he was invested with a new legal status as an indentured worker.**

**He was engaged for five years to Mr. Courson as labourer and then as carpenter.**

**In 1871, he was arrested as a vagrant when he was 41 years old and photographed at the Immigration Depot. By the 1870s, Aboodallah had established his own workshop in the village of Pamplémousses.**

*MGIIIA/PG, PE, and PH Series/ MNA/ RA Series*

Charnon deo	35	Maravy	Saga
Jazee	28	"	Tomamba
Shikera	28	"	Mangozzy
Namkamwinay	40	"	Motugamya
Mangavira	40	"	Isindora
Masana	30	"	Koomromba
Gankawonda	45	"	Cheepeta
Boozee	35	"	Chaniniah
Mirimbow	40	"	Mwokeesse
Mootendremu	25	"	Monkormak
Waiyoka	40	"	Mootinga
Aboodallah	26	"	Misora
Nampaniyak	35	"	

Fig 44. A ship register showing the arrival of Aboodallah (No.231) and twelve of his Maravy companions in 1856. They hailed from different villages located in the interior of Mozambique. The names of their fathers are also indicated on the register.

MGIII/PE, PH and PF Series/ MNA/RA Series/ Courtesy of Mr. L. A. Langany



Fig 45. Jean Jacques Satala was photographed in 1879 at the age of 21 at the Immigration Depot.

He was a Mozambican Liberated African who arrived in Mauritius from the Seychelles in 1869 when he was 11 years old. He was a skilled worker and also a labour overseer of the Liberated African workers on Saint Julien Sugar Estate in Moka.

By the mid-1880s, Immigrant Satala became a small landowner and businessman near the village of Quartier Militaire. He passed away at the age of 67 in 1925.

MGIII/PG, PE and PF Series/MNA/RA Series/Courtesy of F. Satala

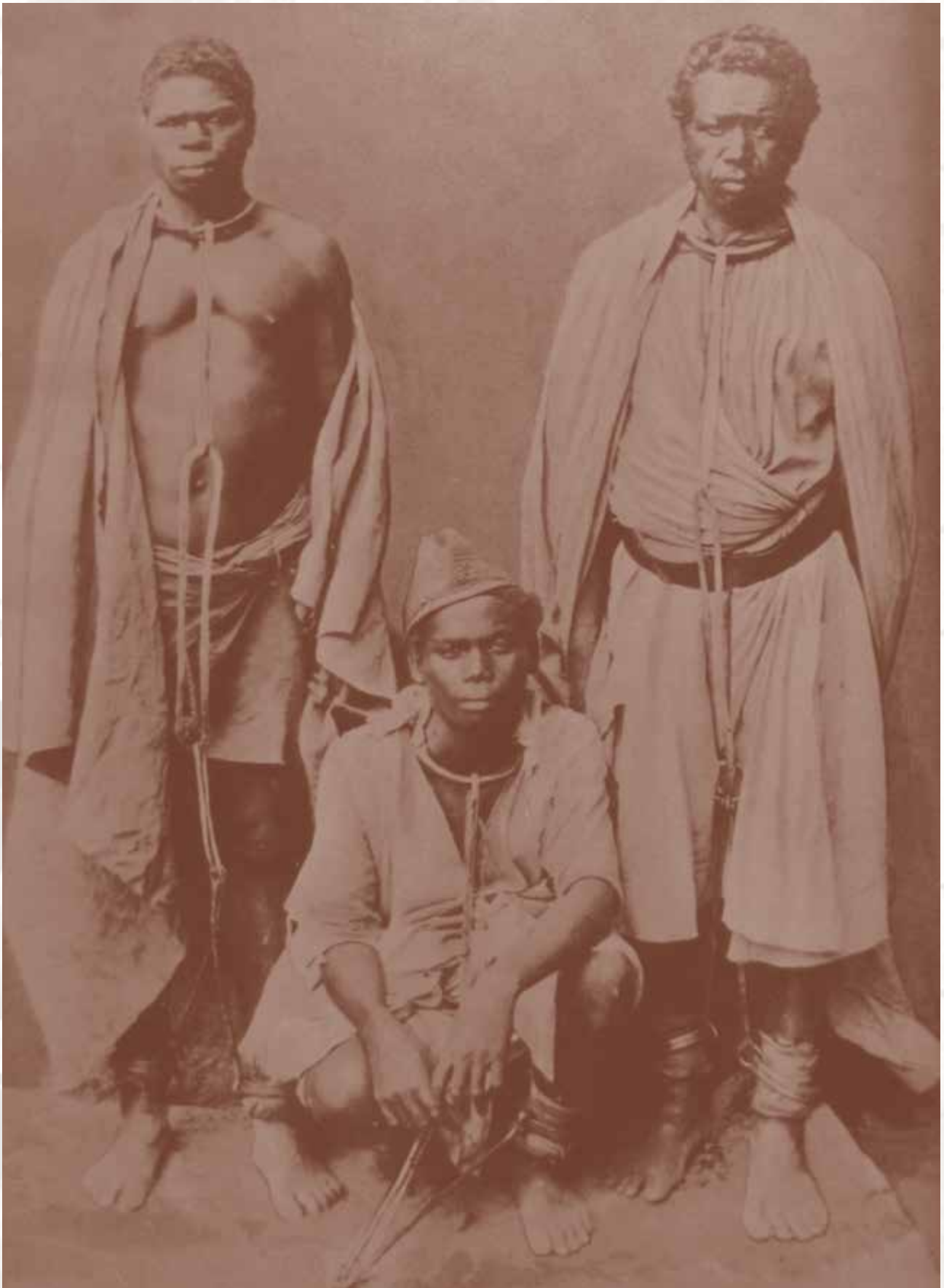




**Fig 46. A group of Liberated Africans with their agricultural tools in front of their living quarters, consisting of wooden barracks, on a sugar estate in Long Mountain in 1870.**

**They were introduced in Mauritius in 1860 and they were under the control of the Protector of Immigrants.**

*Photo Collection/MNA*



**Fig 47. Three Mozambican Liberated Africans who were landed at the Immigration Depot in October 1869. They were photographed while still in chains. They were among the last Liberated Africans to be landed and registered at the Office of the Protector of Immigrants.**

*Mauritius Museums Council (MMC)*



Fig 48. A group of Liberated Africans loading sugar cane under the watchful eye of a labour overseer on Antoinette Sugar Estate in Rivière du Rempart district in 1875.

*Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture (MCA)*

Between 1856 and 1869, the Liberated Africans were registered on landing at the Immigration Depot and were provided with an immigrant number. According to a colonial government circular of 1861 and Ordinance No.18 of 1865, they fell under the authority of the Protector of Immigrants and they enjoyed the same rights and working conditions as the Indian indentured immigrants.

PORT LOUIS MAURITIUS

**List of Liberated Africans, ex the Ship "Manuella,"**

NO.	NAME	FATHER'S NAME	AGE	SEX
1	Chab. Malbaré	Chab. Malbaré	22	M
2	Abel Chamcarana	Chab. Malbaré	22	M
3	Benjamin Kasingah	Chab. Malbaré	21	M
4	Abel Chamcarana	Chab. Malbaré	22	M
5	Henry Amalialah	Chab. Malbaré	15	M
6	Benac Veembah	Chab. Malbaré	23	M
7	Sarah Chamcarana	Chab. Malbaré	18	F
8	Amel Chamcarana	Chab. Malbaré	11	F
9	Nathan Kasingah	Chab. Malbaré	22	M
10	Abel Chamcarana	Chab. Malbaré	35	M

**Prize to Her Majesty's Ship "Brisk."**

NAME	AGE	HOW SUSPECTED OF
Abel Chamcarana	22	Appointed to the service of the plantation
Benjamin Kasingah	21	Appointed to the service of the plantation
Abel Chamcarana	22	Appointed to the service of the plantation
Henry Amalialah	15	Appointed to the service of the plantation
Benac Veembah	23	Appointed to the service of the plantation
Sarah Chamcarana	18	Appointed to the service of the plantation
Amel Chamcarana	11	Appointed to the service of the plantation
Nathan Kasingah	22	Appointed to the service of the plantation
Abel Chamcarana	35	Appointed to the service of the plantation

Fig 49. The ship register of the *Manuella* carrying the names and other particulars of the Liberated Africans who were landed in Port Louis in September 1860. The *Manuella* was captured by the crew of the *Brisk*, a British naval cruiser.

*MGIIIA/PE Series*

During the 1860s, the British government regulations, to a certain extent, provided them a new legal status by turning freed slaves into indentured labourers and eventually British subjects with some of among them being skilled and semi-skilled workers.

Between 1865 and 1869, around 480 Mozambican and some Malagasy Liberated Africans were landed in Port Louis from Port Victoria in the Seychelles. Their living and working conditions were closely regulated by the 1865 colonial ordinance.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY N<sup>o</sup> 36. WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 1865.

---

**ORDINANCE**  
**No. 18 OF 1865.**

—

**HENRY BARKLY.**— *Enacted by the Governor of Mauritius and its Dependencies, with the advice and consent of the Council of Government thereof.*

**AN ORDINANCE** to amend the law regarding Contracts of Service with Liberated Slaves landed in Mauritius or Seychelles.

[4th July 1865.]

**WHEREAS** the law regarding Contracts of Service with persons of African origin who, having been found in vessels captured by Her Majesty's Cruisers engaged in the suppression of the Slave Trade, are landed in Mauritius or Seychelles as liberated slaves, is defective and ought to be amended ;—

**BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED** by His Excellency the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Council of Government, as follows :

Liberated slaves may be engaged. **I.**—All persons of African origin who shall be found in vessels captured by any of Her Majesty's Cruisers engaged in the suppression of the Slave Trade, and shall be landed in Mauritius or Seychelles as liberated slaves may be engaged in Contracts of Service, in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.

The Contracts may be for 5 years and must be in writing. **II.**—Such Contracts of Service may be for any period not exceeding five years. They shall be in writing, and shall be entered into before, and authenticated by, a Stipendiary Magistrate of the place in which they are made.

Conditions of Contracts. **III.**—Every such Contract shall be for an allowance of Wages and Rations in accordance with the Regulations to be framed under the provisions of this Ordinance. The employer shall further be obliged to give his servant proper lodging and medical care.

Liberated slaves landed at Seychelles may be sent to Mauritius. **IV.**—In the event of any Liberated Slaves being landed at any of the Seychelles Dependencies, and of there not being, within these Dependencies, persons whom the Civil Commissioner thereof shall consider fit, and who shall be willing, to enter into contract of service with them, in accordance with this Ordinance and relative Regulations, it shall be lawful to the Civil Commissioner of Seychelles to cause them to be forwarded to Mauritius, to be there engaged in contracts.

Fig 50. Extract from Ordinance No. 18 of 1865, enacted by Governor Henry Barkly, which governed and regulated the lives, labour and mobility of the Liberated Africans in Mauritius as indentured workers.

**LIBERATED AFRICANS.**  
 Arrived at the Depot on the 29<sup>th</sup> September, 1869, on board the Steam Ship *Dryad*

Name	Mother's Name	Sex	Age	Remarks	To whom allotted		Date of allotment	Term of allotment - Years
					Name	Residence		
<u>Girls</u>							1869	
Mariano	Mariano	Female	10	<i>Small Lovers</i>	<i>5/11/19</i>			
Sahip	<i>Photo 100150-</i>		10		<i>5/11/19</i>			
Mabak			10					
Makam	<i>M. married to M. [unclear] 11/7/18</i>		9					
Mariano			8					
Makam			10					
Mahidatuk			9					
					<i>Small Lovers</i>			

Fig 51. The last group of Liberated Africans to arrive in Mauritius was transferred from the Seychelles. They were young Mozambican males and females who were brought on the steam ship the *Dryad* and landed at the Immigration Depot on 29th September 1869. Their living and working conditions were regulated by the 1865 ordinance. Most of them became skilled workers and lived their entire lives in Port Louis and its vicinity.

MGIII/AF Series

Protector of Immigrants.

Schedule B.  
 Liberated Africans  
 arrived at the Depot on the \_\_\_\_\_ 1865.

Number.....

Name.....

Mother's Name.....

Sex.....

Age.....

Stature..... feet. inches.

Marks.....

Fig.52. Sample of an Immigrant Ticket which was issued to the Liberated Africans in 1865 at the Immigration Depot by the Protector of Immigrants.

MGIII/AF Series

In the 1860s, the employers of Liberated Africans were given certificates of allotment by the Protector of Immigrants which detailed the wages and rations to be provided to their labourers. The Liberated African girls were usually engaged for five years to a private employer in order to learn a skilled or semi-skilled trade as household servants, seamstresses, dyers, washerwomen and dressmakers. They were paid a wage ranging from 2 to 4 shillings per month, and were provided with an accommodation, three changes of clothes and two blankets each year, rations, cooking utensils and medical care.

		Males	Females	Total
Aproccans landed on the 25 <sup>th</sup> March 1861.		186	74	260
Died		27	7	34
		<hr/> 159	<hr/> 67	<hr/> 226
Allocated as		Males	Females	
	Carpenters	6	-	
	Coach Builders	2	-	
	Domestic servants	118	50	
	Engineers	1	-	
	Labourers	13	-	
	Masons	1	-	
	Milliners	-	14	
	Painters	2	-	
	Shoe Makers	4	-	
	Seamen	5	-	
	Shoe Makers	1	-	
	Sugar Makers	3	-	
	Tailors	3	-	
		<hr/> 159	<hr/> 67	

Fig 53. The Allocation and Apprenticeships assigned to the Liberated Africans of the *Sidon* in March 1861.

MGHIA/PE Series

87.—The Directors met on the 21st of last month,\* to examine the condition of the Establishment, and inquire into, and report upon, its wants. The institution then contained the following numbers of children :

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Indians . . . . .	119	17	136
Africans . . . . .	76	7	83
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals, . . .	195	24	219
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

88.—The scholastic instruction and industrial training of these Indian children were unavoidably interrupted and disturbed considerably during the latter part of the year by the arrangements it became necessary to go through to provide accommodation for the large number of African Children received from the Slave-Ship *Manuella* and by the bad state of health in which many of these arrived. Yet, on the whole, their intellectual and industrial improvement is very satisfactory.

89.—In September last, the above-mentioned, Slave-Ship, which had been captured on the East Coast of Africa by H. M. S. *Brisk*, introduced 730 Africans (638 males and 92 females).

90.—They were received at the Immigration Depot where they were allowed to enjoy all the benefits extended to Immigrants on their arrival.

91.—The Collector of Customs, who was placed in charge of them in pursuance of the Colonial Regulations, was authorised to distribute them as laborers and apprentices on the most profitable conditions possible. They were disposed of as follows :

	Males.	Females.	Total.
As Ordinary Laborers . . . .	200	..	200
“ Domestic Servants . . . .	60	62	122
“ Apprentices . . . . .	181	2	183

Fig 54. Observations and Report of the Protector of Immigrants dated January 1861 on the Liberated African Children of the *Manuella* or the *Brisk* who were landed in Port Louis in September 1860.

MNA/ARPI

Between the 1860s and 1880s, most of the Liberated African girls and boys were consigned to the Government Orphans' Asylum at Powder Mills in Pamplemousses. At the Asylum, they were taught how to read, write, and count, and learned a particular skilled trade. One of the Liberated African children who lived and was educated at the Asylum was Augustus Mabrook.



Fig 55. Mabrook, a Liberated African, was photographed as a vagrant at the age of 25 at the Immigration Depot in 1879.

MGIIIA/PH Series

Augustus Mabrook arrived in Mauritius at the age of six on the ship the *Sidon* in 1861. He was a Mozambican of the Makua ethnic group. His ship was captured off the coast of Mozambique by the British Royal Navy. He was apprenticed as a servant to Captain Russell for five years. Between 1866 and 1870, he was enrolled for four years at the Government Orphans' Asylum where he received some basic education and apprenticed as a metal worker.

List of Liberated Africans, landed from <i>Nov. 1861 Sidon</i>						
NAME	FATHER'S NAME	AGE	MARKS	DATE OF LANDING AT PORT LOUIS	DATE OF REGISTRATION	HOW EMPLOYED OR
Augustus Mabrook	Chicoregonela (Mozambique)	6	Right hand	17/7/61	14/8/61	26. Chantamban Apprenticed to Capt Russell a servant
Joseph Macroya	Chilobely	6	Right leg			Second to A. David & Co labourer
Joseph Mavouca	Cherubata	28	Left thigh			

Fig 56. The ship arrival register showing the arrival of Augustus Mabrook and two other Mozambican Liberated Africans on the *Sidon* in June 1861.

MGIIIA/PE Series



In the 1860s, Liberated Africans arriving in Port Louis were given a new identity as indentured immigrants. After serving their period of indenture, they became free British subjects. However, unlike the majority of the Indian female immigrants who arrived in Mauritius after 1843, all of the female Liberated Africans were required to serve a five-year indenture contract. After completion of their indentureship, the majority continued to work for the same employer until these women established their own businesses in Port Louis. The life-story of Beatrice Soolia is a case in point or commendable.



**Fig 57. Rebecca Lingafay, a female Liberated African arrived in Mauritius in 1860 at the age of 15. She was engaged to Mr. d'Arifat as a domestic and then as a seamstress. She was photographed at the age of 34 at the Immigration Depot in 1879. By the 1880s, she purchased her own plot of land and established a small commerce in Port Louis. She passed away in 1931 at the age of 86.**

*MGIIIA/PG, PE and PF Series/MNA/RA Series*

## The Experience of a Mozambican Liberated African Woman: The Story and Life Struggle of Beatrice Soolia



Recent research on Liberated African women in nineteenth century Mauritius, has uncovered the interesting life-story of a Mozambican woman, namely that of Beatrice Soolia. Her story recalls the achievements of some liberated African females in the colonial history of Mauritius. Beatrice was only 11 years old when she landed in Mauritius on 13th June 1861 from the Sidon. She was apprenticed as a house servant to Mr Omsbry, a British merchant in Port Louis, for a period of five years. After completing her indenture contract, she was registered at the Immigration Depot as an Old Immigrant and provided with an Old Immigrant Ticket. In December 1870, she was arrested as a vagrant because she had lost her immigrant ticket. She obtained a new one on payment of one pound sterling.

**Fig 58. Beatrice Soolia was photographed at the Aapravasi Ghat in 1909 when she was 59 years old.**

*MGIIIA/PG & PE Series*

The same year, Beatrice stopped working as house servant at Mr Omsbry's place to take up employment as trainee seamstress in Mr Le Conte's clothing store at Royal Street in Port Louis. During the 1870s, she learnt to read and write and received 20 shillings per month as a fully trained and experienced seamstress.

Beatrice left the service of Mr. Le Conte in 1882. By then, she was educated and had acquired ample experience as seamstress. She rented a small house at Camp Yoloff, in Port Louis, in order to establish her own business as a seamstress. Beatrice's companion was Jean Louis Adolphe, a Creole who was employed as foreman in the Mauritius Docks Company. She converted to Catholicism and they had five children, three sons and two daughters.

In 1909, at the age of 59, she obtained a non-marriage certificate and legitimized her relationship with Jean Louis Adolphe through a civil marriage. Another important reason for contracting a civil marriage was because they purchased the wooden house and 10 perches plot of land for the sum of Rs. 5,102 which they had been renting for more than a quarter century at Camp Yolloff.

Between the early 1900s and the mid-1920s, Beatrice continued to work as a seamstress with a clear sense of business acumen. She also provided training to other Liberated African and Creole women residing in Camp Yolloff and Port Louis, who aspired to pursue the same profession.

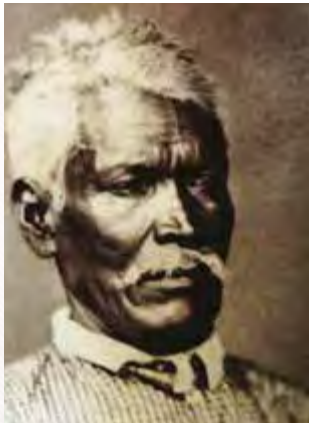


**Fig 59. The tomb of Beatrice Soolia at Bois Marchand Cemetery who passed away in 1925.**

*Courtesy of the Soolia family*

After the death of her husband in 1919, Beatrice contacted Mr. Robert Koenig, a well-known notary based in Port Louis, to prepare a will. Thus, Beatrice had already made provisions for the legal transfer of her property to her children after her death. Beatrice passed away on 1st June 1925 and was buried at Bois Marchand Cemetery.

# Annexes



*“The abolition of slavery has rendered the British colonies [including Mauritius and its dependencies] the scene of an experiment whether the staple products of imperial countries can be raised as effectually and as advantageously by the labour of free men as by that of slaves. To bring that momentous question to a fair trial, it is requisite that no unnecessary discouragement should be given to the introduction of free labourers into the colonies [such as Mauritius]....”*

MNA/SA33/47, Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Governor Gomm (British Governor of Mauritius and its Dependencies), Colonial Office, London, UK, 22nd January 1842)

*“After the abolition of slavery in British colonies, West Indian sugar producers lost their domination of the sugar market. The equalization of tariffs encouraged countries of the Indian Ocean to cultivate the sugar-cane on a commercial basis. Hence, India, Malaya, Penang, the East Indies as well as the Mascarenes, particularly Mauritius, entered the world market as sugar producers. The success of the Mascarene Islands in the production of sugar constitutes the triumph of free labour over the institution of slavery in the Indian Ocean.”*

Dr. Huguette Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo, Lured Away: the Life History of Cane Workers in Mauritius (MGI, Mauritius, 2009)

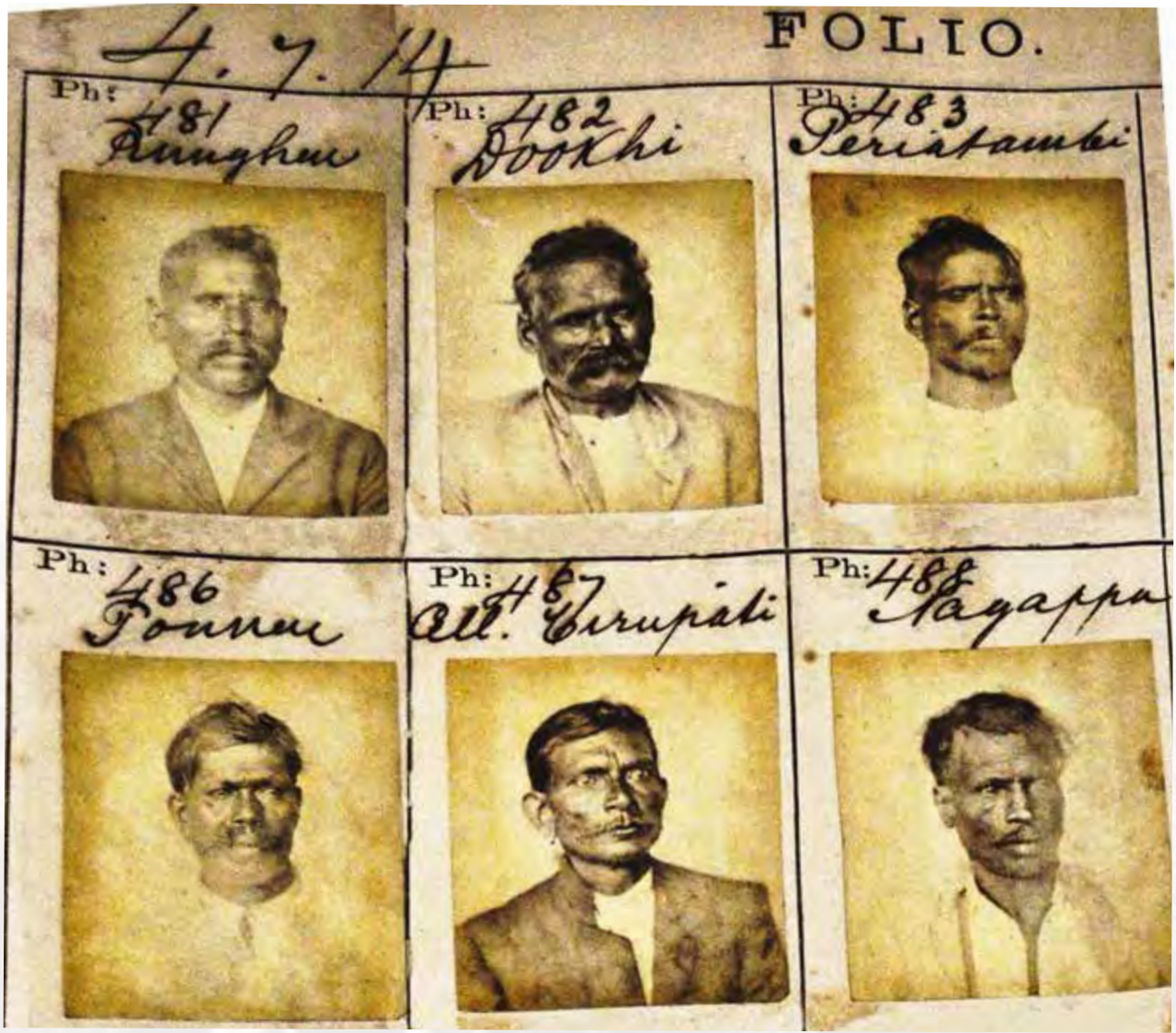


Fig 60. The last former Indian Indentured Labourers to be photographed at the Immigration Depot in 1914. They reached Mauritian shores between 1865 and 1910.

*MGIIIA/PG and PE Series*

Immigrants to whom Free Return passages have been granted under Article						
No.	NAME	Father's Name	Sex	Age	Nation Village or Zillah	Ship by which introduced
1331	Jahoowan	Nikichand	female	39	Gauda	Janus
1332	Ramzan	do	male	68	"	"
1333	Baldin	do	male	4 1/2	"	"
1334	Rasulan	do	female	8 1/2	"	"
75	Alijan	Mohamed Hussein	male	30 1/2	Bengal	Janus
6	Rasulan	Yusuf	female	29 1/2	"	"
2	Balwan	-	female	40 1/2	Basti	Surada
-	Chawan	Yusuf	male	40	Ambara	"
-	Gujran	-	female	60 1/2	Agungul	"
-	Randul	Chitro	male	16 1/2	Agungul	S.S. Surada
-	Chitro	Chitro	"	7 1/2	"	"
-	Masita	Masita	male	44 1/2	Moradabad	S.S. Janus
-	Rahman	Chitro	female	41 1/2	"	"

Fig 61. The ship list of the former Indian indentured immigrants who returned to India in 1924. It is estimated that between 1911 and 1926, around 5000 to 6000 Former Indian indentured workers made the return trip to the Indian subcontinent with their wives, children, in-laws, and grandchildren for permanent resettlement.

This can be seen in the case of Immigrant Jahoowan who returned to India with her three children Rawan, Baldin, and Rasulan in December 1924.

Jahoowan arrived in 1910 as a 16-year old girl on the *Surada* from Ganda district of Bihar through Calcutta. Her three kids were born in Mauritius and were Indo-Mauritians, and their father was an Indo-Mauritian. She returned to India after having lived and worked in Mauritius for almost a decade and a half.

# Annex One

Between January and June 1871, a historic petition was signed by 9401 Indian immigrants including Old Immigrants, New Immigrants, and even some Indian merchants and traders and Indo-Mauritians. The petition was drafted by Adolph de Plevitz, the Franco-German manager of Nouvelle Decouverte sugar estate of French and German origins and a vocal defender of the indentured workers in Mauritius. Around 71% or 6674 signatories and petitioners of this historic document were Old Immigrants who had reached Mauritian shores between 1826 and 1856, such as Immigrant Veerappen No.4474. He arrived in Port Louis in 1829 at the age of 40. Over 33% among them knew how to sign their names in their native languages.



Fig 62. The Historic De Plevitz Petition was drafted in June 1871 by Adolph de Plevitz who submitted it to Governor Sir Hamilton Gordon who then sent it to the Colonial Office.

It played a central role in the appointment of the Royal Commission of Inquiry of 1875.

MNA/RA Series

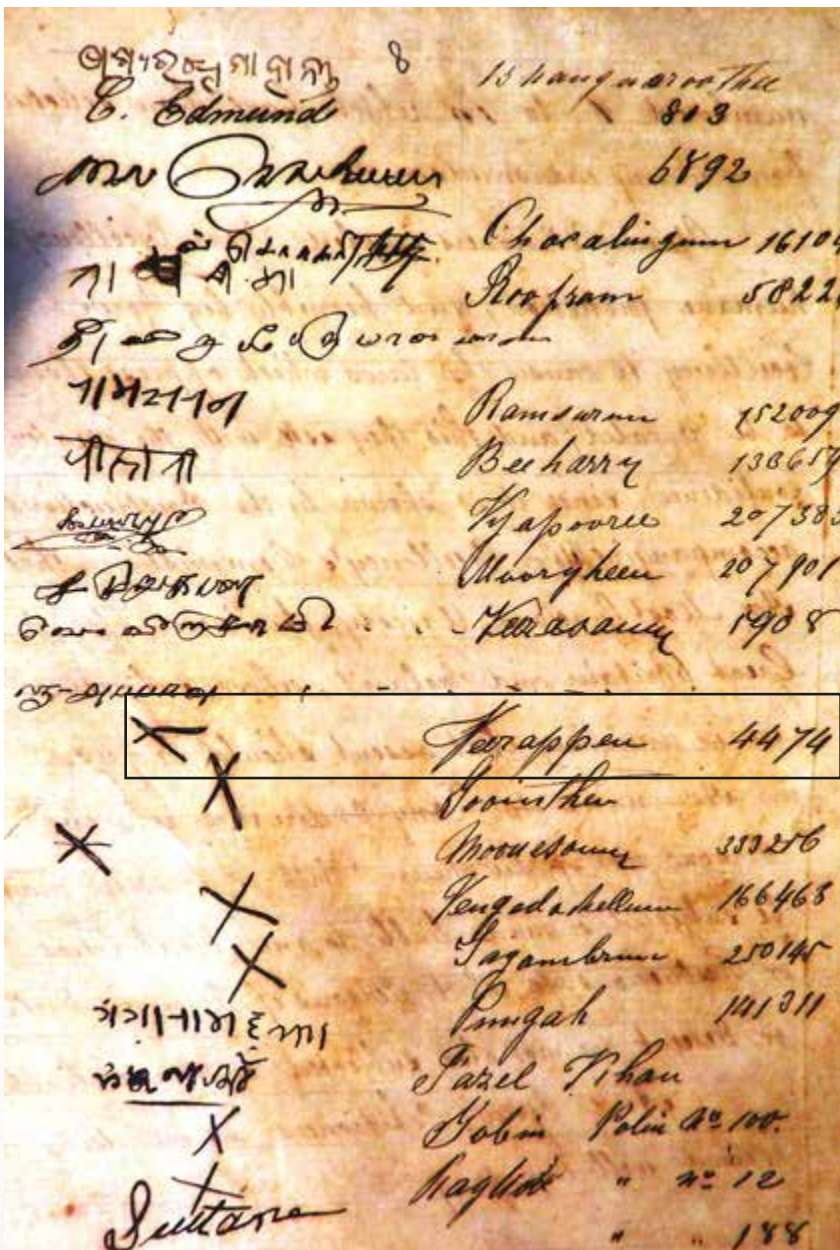


Fig 63. An Extract from the De Plevitz which highlights the signatures, names, and immigrant numbers of around 21 of the estimated 9401 individuals who signed this precious document including Immigrant Veerappen No.4474.

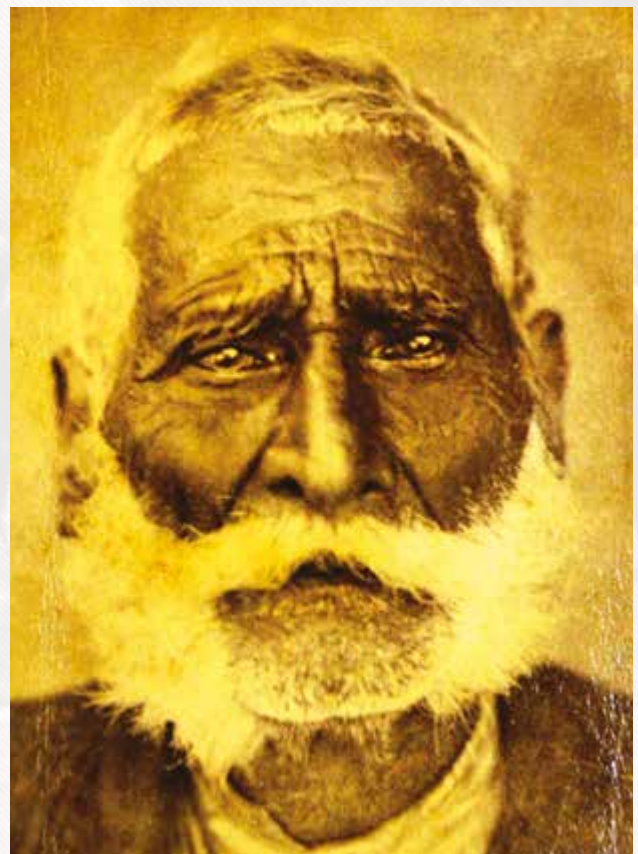
MNA/RA Series

Fig 64. Immigrant Veerappen No.4474 was photographed in January 1871 at the age of 82 at the Immigration Depot after he had been arrested as a vagrant.

He was imprisoned for one week at the Vagrant Depot of Grand River North West which propelled him to sign the petition. By then he had resided and worked his entire life in Pamplémousses district.

He was a small landowner and cultivator and a retired sirdar and job contractor. He passed away in 1881 at the age of 92 in Pamplémousses village.

MGIIIA, PG, PE and PF Series / MNA/RA Series / CSO / RGD





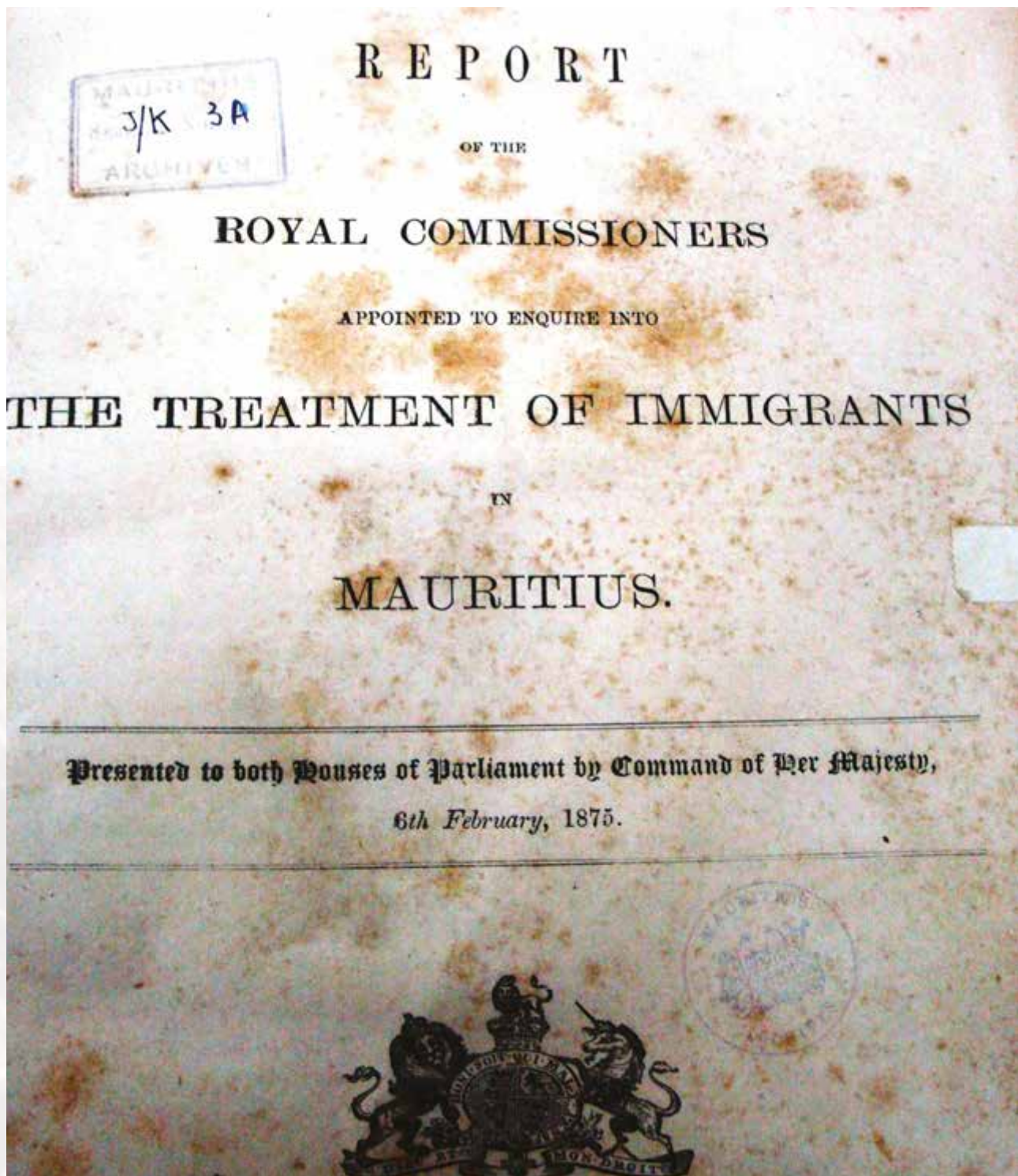


Fig 65. The famous Report of the Royal Commissioners was published in London on 6th February 1875 following the submission of the De Plevitz Petition in 1871 by Governor Sir Hamilton Gordon. It provided detailed information on the lives and living and working conditions of the indentured and ex-indentured workers and their social history between the late 1820s and early 1870s. It is one of the major historic documents when studying and researching on the Mauritian experience with indentured labour.

MNA/JK 3A

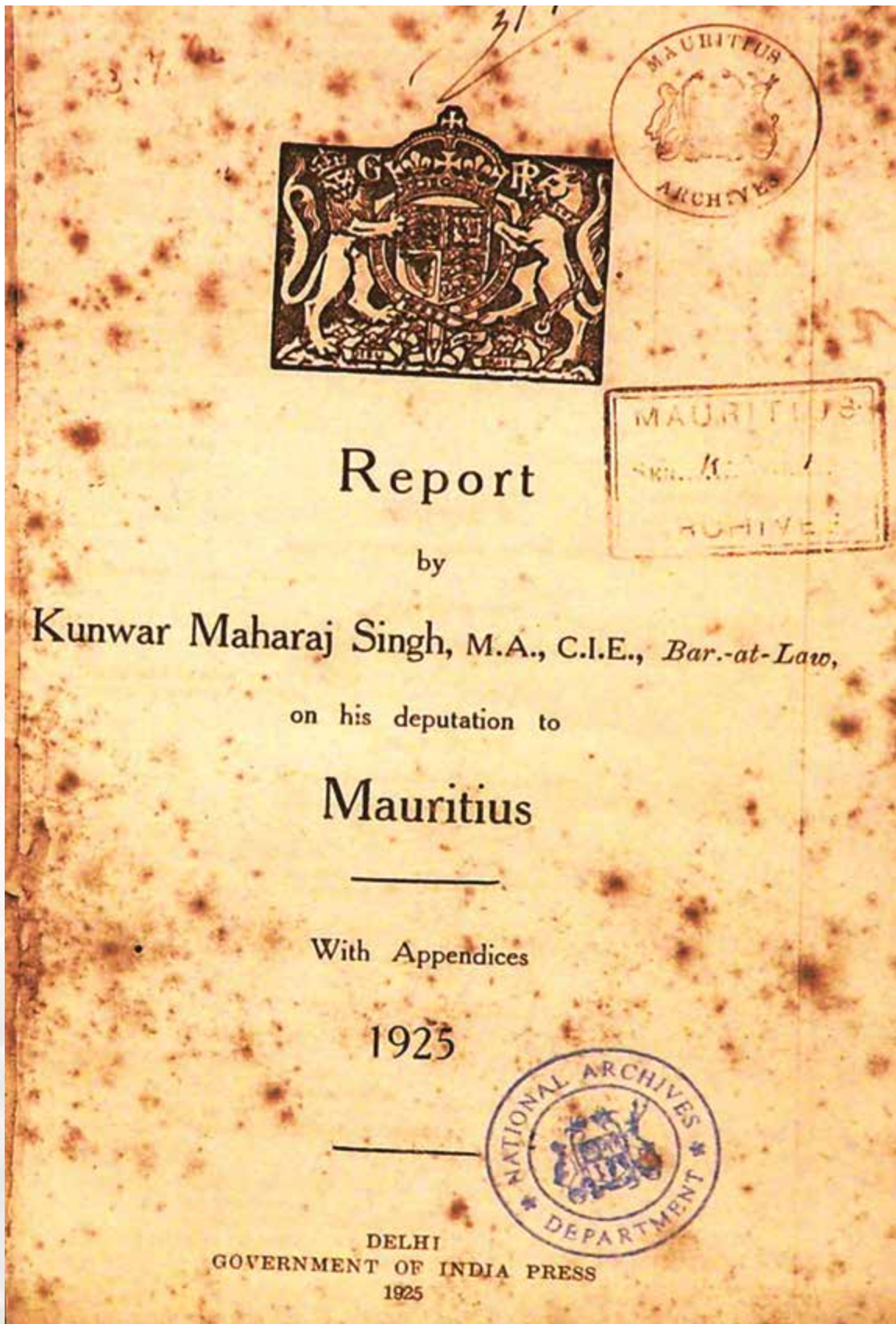


Fig 66. The historic Report of Kunwar Maharaj Singh which was published in Delhi, India in 1925. It provided detailed information on the indentured and ex-indentured Indian workers and their descendants between 1900 and 1924. It also recommended the abolition of the export of Indian indentured labourers to Mauritian shores which was officially adopted by the British imperial government of India.

# Annex Two

## Chronology of Indentured Labour, The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, and the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund in Mauritius (1826-2017)

- 1826 The arrival of Immigrant Mahamod, the first well-documented indentured labourer in British Mauritius
- 1829 Around 1500 Indian and Chinese indentured workers are imported into Mauritius in what was part of an early labour experiment with indentured labour. The majority of the indentured workers were repatriated within a few months of their arrival
- 1834 Beginning of the indentured labour system under private auspices with the importation of the 36 Hill Coolies by George Arbuthnot on 2nd November
- 1835 Abolition of slavery in Mauritius
- 1834-1839 The Great Experiment gets underway with the importation of more than 25,000 indentured workers from India
- 1839 Suspension of Indian labour immigration by the British Government of India
- 1842 Resumption of Indian immigration under government control
- 1843 The Office of the Protector of Immigrants and laws regulating indentured labour are enacted. The system becomes state-controlled and state-sponsored
- 1849 The Aapravasi Ghat or Immigration Depot or the Immigration Department located at Trou Fanfaron becomes operational
- Mid-1850s Flat Island and Gabriel Island are used as quarantine stations
- 1864 The Vagrant Depot becomes operational
- 1864-1865 The expansion of the Immigration Depot gets underway and the Depot is divided into two sections in order to make way for the Northern Railway Line
- 1867 The Labour Law of 1867 is enacted
- 1869 The de Plevitz Petition is drafted and it bears the signature of more than 9,100 indentured workers and outlines their grievances with regards to the planters, local police and colonial administrators

- 1875 The Report of the Royal Commission of 1875 which investigated into the living, working and social conditions of the indentured labourers and their descendants, is published in London
- 1909 The Report of the Royal Commission of 1909 is published in London which also partially looks into the social and economic conditions of the indentured labourers and recommends the abolition of the indentured labour system
- 1910 The Aapravasi Ghat receives the last indentured labourers and the Sanderson Committee in London recommends the end of the indenture system in the British Empire
- 1923-1924 The last indentured labourers are brought to Mauritius on an experimental basis and is suspended within less than a year
- 1925 The Report of Maharaj Kunwar Singh is published which recommends the end of the indenture labour system in Mauritius
- 1935 Indo-Mauritian notables organize the centenary of the Indian colonization of Mauritius. It is the first time that the arrival of the indentured workers is commemorated in our country
- 1938 Post of Protector of Immigrants is abolished and replaced by the Director of Labour. The Labour Department is given the task of looking after the welfare and interests of the remaining former Indian indentured workers and their descendants.
- 1950 Public Assistance Department is established at the Aapravasi Ghat
- 1958 The Vagrant Depot was decreed National Monument. It is the first indenture site to be officially recognised and given this status.
- 1970 Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, visits the site and Mr. Ramlallah starts his campaign for the recognition and safeguarding of the Aapravasi Ghat Site
- 1974 The Old Labourers' Quarters of Trianon was decreed National Monument  
Forbach Windmill was also decreed National Monument
- 1976 Immigration records are transferred to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute
- 1984 The 150th anniversary of the arrival of the indentured labourers in Mauritius is commemorated for the first time at a national level by the Government of Mauritius the highlight being an official visit by President of Zail Singh of India at the Coolie Ghat where he paid homage to the achievements of the indentured workers
- 1987 Immigration Depot also known as the Coolie Ghat is declared a National Monument by National Monuments Board
- 1989 The name Coolie Ghat is changed to the Aapravasi Ghat through a decision of the Government of Mauritius
- 1991 The MGI Indian Immigration Archives and Folk Museum is inaugurated
- 2001 Setting up of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund

- 2001 2 November is declared a public holiday
- 2002 The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Board is created
- 2004 Beginning of the Aapravasi Ghat Conservation Project
- 2002-2004 Archaeological excavation of the site
- 2004 Koichiro Matsuura, the then Director General of UNESCO, visits the site
- 2005 Dossier nominating the Aapravasi Ghat as a World Heritage Site is submitted to UNESCO
- 2006 The Aapravasi Ghat is inscribed on UNESCO's List of World heritage Sites on the 16th July and the AGTF Act is amended
- 2010 The Aapravasi Ghat Conservation Project is completed
- 2011 The first International Indentured Labour Conference was organised by AGTF with the collaboration of MAC at the University of Mauritius in November of the same year
- The Planning Policy Guidance is enacted for the Aapravasi Ghat Buffer Zone and the AGTF Act is amended
- 2014 The Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre (BRIC) is opened at the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site. The Government of Mauritius commemorates the 180th anniversary of the arrival of the indentured workers in Mauritius at the national level at the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site
- The Government of Mauritius was able to get the official support of UNESCO for the International Indenture Labour Route Project, with AGTF acting as the Secretariat for the project in October of the same year
- The second International Indentured Labour Conference was organised by AGTF with the collaboration of MAC at the MGI in November of the same year
- 2015 The historic visit of His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India
- 2016 The celebration of 10th anniversary of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site
- The historic visit of His Excellency Ban Ki Moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations
- The inscription of the Indentured Labour Archives of the Republic of Mauritius on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register
- The inscription of Geet Gawai on UNESCO's Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage
- 2017 The 183rd anniversary of the arrival of the indentured labourers is commemorated at the national level at the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site.

# Annex Three

**Table 1: Colonial Laws and Ordinances which were enacted to control and regulate the work and lives of Indentured Labourers and their Descendants in Mauritius <sup>2</sup>**

No.	Year	Ord. No.	Details
1	1835	16	First attempt to control the former slaves, apprentices, indentured labourers and other non-European servants and menial workers
2	1843	21	Prohibition of person introduced as indentured labour from Africa and Asia to work in shops and warehouses / to take part in commercial activities
3	1846	1	The engagement calculated in terms of actual days worked and penalties for non fulfillment of working days.
4	1847	22	Concept of 'Old' and 'New' immigrant, the immigrant ticket and mandatory registration of Old Immigrants are introduced
5	1847	23	Male immigrant must complete a term of of 5 years 'industrial residence', in other words he can engage himself to work in only one sugar estate for the whole five-year term
6	1849	3	All indentures to be signed in Mauritius and immigrants given 48 hours to choose an employer ; Contracts of immigrants extended to 3 years
7	1852	15 & 16	Attempts to stop Old Immigrants from employing labourers and keep them on sugar estates. Strict vagrancy laws and beginning of vagrant hunts.
8	1858	30	Denial of the right of indentured labourer to choose his employer ; Right of immigrants to free return passage abolished
10	1862	16	Term of indenture extended to 5 years, women could be engaged for term of 1 year for light work and registered as labourers; Concept of Old Immigrant Ticket; Double cut system became law
11	1863	16	Contracts to be signed in India for 5 years. If they did not find other work or return to India they would be forced to reindenture for another 5 years
12	1864	4	Ordinance which made provision for female immigrants to be employed on 1 –year contracts and to be registered as labourers/workers
13	1864	18	Law regarding contract of service made in the colony with Indian immigrants
14	1867	31	An Ordinance to consolidate and amend certain laws relating to Indian Immigrants and other laborer within the colony and its dependencues. It was the most important and repressive law restricting the mobility of indentured and ex-indentured immigrant. Pass system introduced for Indian immigrants
15	1878	1 & 12	To amend and consolidate the laws relative to immigration and the Labour Laws of Mauritius
16	1907	7	To amend and consolidate the labour laws of 1878 and 1889
17	1922	15	To validate and amend the Labour Ordinance of 1914 and commonly known as the Labour Law of 1922. It took out the penal clause from the labour contract, immigrants were not be arrested as vagrants and deserters and labour contracts were reduced to 1 year or 12 months
18	1939	22	The new labour law replaces the Labour Law of 1922, replaces the office of the Protector of Immigrants with the Labour Department and a Director of Labour and his Labour Inspectors

2. Compiled from MNA & NL, *Laws, Ordinances, and Proclamations of the Colony of Mauritius for 1835 to 1939*.

## Annex Four

**Table 2 : The Vagrant Depot Prison Population (1864-1886)**

Years	Number of Prisoners
February 1865 to March 1866	4,933
1864-1871	40,967
January to December 1881	906
1872-1886	19,102
1864-1886	60,069

## Annex Five

**Table 3: The Number of Vagrant Indian Immigrants who were arrested in Mauritius (January 1861-December 1871)<sup>3</sup>**

Years	Number of Vagrants Arrested
1861	23,371
1862	16,668
1863	17,551
1864	18,834
1865	18,382
1866	19,416
1867	16,884
1868	22,357
1869	23,916
1870	16,880
1871	12,096
<b>Total</b>	<b>206,304</b>

3. Compiled for Tables 2 and 3, MNA/B Series/Annual Reports of the Protector of Immigrants for 1861 to 1871; RA Series, Reports and Letters of the Prison Committee for 1861 to 1871.

# Annex Six

**Table 4: The Number of Indenture Contracts signed between 1870 and 1904 including those of the Mozambican Liberated Africans**

**PF SERIES (1870-1904) INDENTURED LABOUR CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENT REGISTERS CONCERNING THE LIBERATED AFRICANS WHO WORKED ON SUGAR ESTATES AND IN PORT LOUIS BETWEEN IN 1870 AND 1904<sup>4</sup>**

The PF Series or THE Indentured Immigrant Labour Contracts consist of 113 volumes from PF 1 to PF 79B. It covers the period 1826 to 1915 and contains the indenture contracts and agreements of an estimated 211,000 Indian and other indentured workers or around 45% or just less than half of all the engaged workers who came to Mauritian shores during the Age of Indenture. These precious records are housed at the MGI Indian Immigration Archives.

<b>PF SERIES (1870-1904)</b>			
No.	Volume Number	DATES	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF OLD IMMIGRANTS LISTED AS BEING ENGAGED FOR 1 TO 5 YEAR CONTRACTS ON VARIOUS SUGAR ESTATES AND IN PORT LOUIS
1	PF 8	January 1870 to January 1873	9,000 Labourers including 300 Liberated Africans
2	PF 15	January 1879 and January 1880	7,000 labourers including 250 Liberated Africans
3	PF 16	January 1879 and January 1881	6,000 labourers including 200 Liberated Africans
4	PF 30	June to July 1881	8,000 labourers including 275 Liberated Africans
5	PF 35	March 1882 to March 1883	4,000 labourers including 150 Liberated Africans
6	PF 40	July to September 1884	9,000 labourers including 300 Liberated Africans
7	PF 45	January 1885 to January 1886	3000 Labourers including 100 Liberated Africans
8	PF 49	July to August 1888	5000 Labourers including 175 Liberated Africans
9	PF 56	January 1894 and December 1894	6000 labourers including 200 Liberated Africans
10	PF 60	January 1896 to January 1897	2000 labourers including 65 Liberated Africans
11	PF 25	April to May 1880	9000 labourers including 150 Liberated Africans
12	PF 70	June to December 1904	4000 labourers including 200 Liberated Africans
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12 VOLUMES</b>	<b>January 1870 to December 1904</b>	<b>72000 labourers including 200 Liberated Africans or more than 3% of the total number of indentured labourers registered as Old Immigrants</b>

4. MGIIIA/PF Series, Indenture Labour Contracts, PF 8, 15, 16, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 49, 56, 60, and 70 for the period between January 1870 to December 1904.



# Annex Seven

**Table 5: The Percentages of Indian and Indo-Mauritian Males arrested as Vagrants in Mauritius between the 1836 and 1910<sup>5</sup>**

Years	Percentages of Indian and Indo-Mauritian Males Arrested in Mauritius as Vagrants
1836-1837	13%-21%
Mid-1840s	7-11%
Late 1870s and 1880s	3%-4%
1836-1910	12%
1850s	4%
1861-1871	8%-17%



**Fig 65. Immigrant Abdool Karim arrived in Mauritius in 1856 from Muscat, Oman at the age of 30. He was an Muslim Omani indentured labourer who worked in Port Louis. By the 1870s and 1880s, he became a small trader on Farquhar Street near Port Louis Central Market.**

**In 1886, Abdool Karim was arrested as a vagrant in Port Louis at the age of 60. During the same year, he was photographed at the Immigration Depot and was the last vagrant to be incarcerated at the Vagrant Depot of Grand River North West.**

*MGIIIA/PG, PE, PF, and PH Series*

5. MNA/HA & RA Series, Reports and Letters of the Stipendiary Magistrates (1836 - 1880); ARPI (1859 - 1910), PB Series, Letters and Reports from the Protector of Immigrants (1843 - 1880); MGIIIA, PH and PO Series (1865 - 1910).

# Annex Eight

**Table 6: Arrivals of Malagasy Indentured Workers in Mauritius during the 1840s\***

**REGISTER OF NATIVES FROM MADAGASCAR WHO ARRIVED IN 1840 (MGIIIA/PE Series)**

Name	Name of Vessel	Date of Arrival	Under Whose Security	End of Engagement
Augustin	<i>Tartar</i>	31 Jan 1840	Thorné Brothers	
Boude	<i>Arpinseur</i>	9 May 1840	Thorné Brothers	
Lasse	<i>Arpinseur</i>	9 May 1840	Thorné Brothers	
Javane	<i>Edward</i>	3 June 1840		
Irab	<i>Edward</i>	3 June 1840	M. Leclezio	
Benakita	<i>William Allen</i>	21 June 1840	Dupont & Aurel	
Ntsofof	<i>William Allen</i>	21 June 1840	Dupont & Aurel	
Sasatia			Dupont & Aurel	
Isiofatra			Dupont & Aurel	
Andriamilebysy			Dupont & Aurel	
Manindroisy			Dupont & Aurel	
Rabossy			Dupont & Aurel	
Lamony Hiolady			Dupont & Aurel	
Lalovana			Dupont & Aurel	
Labykontolony			Dupont & Aurel	
Masenandre	<i>Edward</i>	26 Aug 1840	M. Leclezio	5 Oct 1841
Chiffe	<i>Edward</i>	26 Aug 1840	M. Leclezio	5 Oct 1841
Pirre	<i>Edward</i>	26 Aug 1840	M. Leclezio	5 Oct 1841
Eungueza			M. Leclezio	
Chinfide			M. Leclezio	
Schendi + litz			M. Leclezio	
Totela			M. Leclezio	5 Oct 1841
Sanderoula				5 Oct 1841
Jacquimaza Laguemanze	<i>Edward</i>			
Tsimanzely				
Ilire				
Laton				
Sangour				
Mause				

\* Note: The archival information for Annexes 8, 9, and 10 were collected and transcribed with the help of Mrs. Babita Devi Bahadoor-Rambhajan, Research Assistant at AGTF, at the MGI Indian Immigration Archives.

Simedouse				
Ideha Dedeenhare				
Diamanque				
Immandre				
Boutezase				
Isemitia	<i>Etoile</i>	3 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	5 Oct 1841
Indongra	<i>Etoile</i>	3 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	5 Oct 1841
Tiga	<i>Etoile</i>	3 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	5 Oct 1841
Iboka	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Ibootomena	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Itsimidosy	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Ibano	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	18 Nov 1841
Irolo	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Imbebatre	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Imahana	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Ileska	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Ibotohely	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Imougana	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Mouza	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Imalakya	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Hiroula	<i>Trois Frères</i>	28 Sep 1840	Mr. Berger Dujonnel	
Itendra				
Rabotto 1st	<i>Etoile</i>	6 Oct 1840	Mssrs Austin & al & afterwards gave over to Raffray ...	16 Oct 1841
Kopa	<i>Etoile</i>	6 Oct 1840	ditto	14 Oct 1841
Rabotto 2nd	<i>Etoile</i>	6 Oct 1840	ditto	16 Oct 1841
Botifony	<i>Etoile</i>	6 Oct 1840	ditto	
Itrishita	<i>Etoile</i>	6 Oct 1840	ditto	
Tely	<i>Etoile</i>	6 Oct 1840	ditto	16 Oct 1841
Botomena	<i>Etoile</i>	6 Oct 1840	ditto	16 Oct 1841
Indondo	<i>Edward</i>	29 Oct 1840	Mr. E. Desmarais	
Sola	–	1840	Mr. Lola	
Tsiamrampy			Mr. Raffany	
Zackatzara			ditto	
Inzirona	<i>Cesar</i>	4 Nov 1840	ditto	
Isizengrena	<i>William Allen</i>	10 Nov 1840	Mr. Dioré	
Isontsona	<i>William Allen</i>	10 Nov 1840	ditto	
Soga	<i>ditto</i>	ditto	ditto	
Bezano	<i>ditto</i>	ditto	ditto	
Kabo Ralava	<i>ditto</i>	ditto	ditto	
Rainimamaso	<i>ditto</i>	ditto	ditto	
Botety	<i>ditto</i>	ditto	ditto	
Ramoutar	<i>ditto</i>	ditto	ditto	
Songa	<i>ditto</i>	ditto	ditto	
Kery	<i>ditto</i>	ditto	ditto	
Mezerana	<i>ditto</i>	ditto	ditto	

# Annex Nine

## Table 7: Arrivals of Malagasy and Chinese Indentured Immigrants between 1840 and 1843

### IMMIGRANTS ORIGINATING FROM EAST ASIA (SINGAPORE & PENANG) & MADAGASCAR (MGIIIA/PE Series)

NO.	DATE OF ARRIVAL	DATE LANDED	NAME OF VESSEL	CAPTAIN / MASTER	PORT OF EMBARKATION	NO. OF PASSENGERS			TYPE / CASTE OF THE IMMIGRANT
						MALE	FE-MALE	TOTAL	
									Under Whose Security
1	29 Dec 1840		<i>John Slaves</i>		Calcutta	55			Chinese
2	4 May 1841		<i>Ganges</i>		Penang	65			Chinese
3	9 Aug 1841		<i>Sir Charles Forbes</i>			71			Chinese
4	10 Aug 1841		<i>Sivallow</i>			88			Chinese
5	10 Aug 1841		<i>Sir Charles Forbes</i>			69			Chinese
6	22 Sep 1841		<i>Lervick</i>			56			Chinese
7	15 July 1842		<i>Exmouth</i>		for Calcutta	44			Chinese
8	10 May 1842		<i>Mary Bulmer</i>		Singapore	77			Chinese
9	10 May 1842		<i>Bryan</i>		Singapore	45			Chinese
10	8 July 1842		<i>Donna Carmelita</i>			56			Chinese
11	9 Nov 1837		<i>Hatkins</i>			33			Chinese
	16 Nov 1842		<i>Mary Bulmer</i>		Singapore	22			Chinese
	15 Jan 1843				Partly from Penang	47		50	Chinese
12	26 Mar 1843	28 Mar 1843	<i>Donna Carmelita</i>	Capt. Joss	Singapore	140		140	Chinese
16	17 Apr 1843	22 Apr 1843	<i>Brig Rambler</i>	Capt. Hutchinson	Singapore	122		122	Chinese
19	19 Apr 1843	29 Apr 1843	<i>Barque Europe</i>	Capt. Meistre	Penang	79		79	Chinese
24	2 May 1843	6 May 1843	<i>Brig William</i>	Capt. J. H. Scott	Penang	129		129	Chinese
44	4 July 1843	11 July 1843	<i>Brig Hatkins</i>	Capt. White-side	Singapore	114		114	Chinese
72	28 Aug 1843	6 Sep 1843	<i>Barque Manchester</i>	Capt. Turner	Madagascar	5		5	Malgache
89	15 Sep 1843	2 Oct 1843	<i>Schooner Edward</i>	Capt. Quimbeau	Noseepallee	17		17	Malgache
230	Unknown	Unknown	<i>Barque Manchester</i>	Capt. W. Turner		5		5	Malgache
1150	8 July 1850		<i>Schooner Josephine Loiseau</i>		Madagascar			54	Malgache

# Annex Ten

## Table 8: Arrivals of Comorians, Malagasies, and East Africans (Mozambican) Indentured Workers in Mauritius between 1841 and 1856

### SHIP ARRIVALS FROM EAST AFRICA, MADAGASCAR AND COMOROS ISLAND RECORDS OF SHIP ARRIVAL AND PORTS OF EMBARKATION (MGIIIA/PE Series)

No.	DATE	NAME OF VESSEL	PORT OF EMBARKATION	PASSENGERS
1	25 Jan 1841	<i>Donna Carmelita</i>		203
2	20 Nov 1841	<i>Eliza Lane</i>		25
1	8 July 1850	<i>Schooner Josephine Loizeau</i>	Nosi Be, Madagascar	54
2	6 July 1850	<i>Brig Briton &amp; Cruaux</i>	Massoah, Abbyssima	3
3	11 Aug 1850	<i>Schooner Mazepa</i>	Be, Madagascar	8
4	13 Sep 1850	<i>Brig "Manchester"</i>	Vola Massa / Madagascar	4
5	9 Oct 1850	<i>Schooner Josephine Loizeau</i>	Nosi Be, Madagascar	6
6	28 Oct 1850	<i>Barque "Ariel C. Lucas"</i>	Mora, Madagascar	7
7	29 Aug 1851	<i>Brig Briton &amp; Cruaux</i>	Madagascar	1
8	30 Oct 1850	<i>Schooner Jeune Antoinette</i>	Nosi Be, Madagascar	2
9	19 Feb 1851	<i>Barque "Ariel C. Lucas"</i>	Mora, Madagascar	6
10	29 Aug 1851	<i>Barque "Ariel C. Lucas"</i>	Madagascar	32
11	27 Dec 1851	<i>Brig "Deborah"</i>		
12	7 Dec 1851	<i>Schooner Gregorio</i>	St. Augustin's Bay, Madagascar	9
13	10 Nov 1851	<i>Arab Ship Fattay Rahamon</i>	Muscat	10
14	21 Apr 1852	<i>Barque Bright Planet</i>	Matsikora, West Coast of Madagascar	25
15	21 May 1852	<i>Barque "Despatch"</i>	Tamatave, Madagascar	6
16	15 Dec 1855	<i>Barque Soher (136 tons)</i>	St. Augustine Bay, Madagascar	15
17	13 Dec 1855	<i>Sch. Gregorio (74 tons)</i>	St. Augustine Bay, Madagascar	3
18	29 Jan 1856	<i>Fth Scieur Steamer "Mascareignes" (570 tons)</i>	Ibo, Africa	320
19	8 Feb 1856	<i>French ship "Gol" of tons</i>	St. Ausgustine Bay, Madagascar	23
20	19 June 1856	<i>Bark Soher (136 tons)</i>	St. Augustine Bay, Madagascar	105
21	15 July 1856	<i>Emma Izadora</i>	Foule Pointe	1

***'They Came to Mauritian Shores: The Life-Stories and History of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius (1826-1937)'*** is a landmark book which is being launched by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund with the collaboration of the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Prime Minister's Office in the context of the national commemorations marking the 183rd anniversary of the arrival of the indentured workers in Mauritius. It provides a detailed narrative on the life-stories of more than 110 Indian and other contract workers from the late 1820s to the late 1930s.

This new publication vividly narrates the stories of more than 462,000 indentured men, women, and children who reached Mauritian shores between 1826 and 1910. Through its 180 highly visual and informative pages, more than 270 pictures, maps, charts and tables, it highlights the social, economic, and demographic transformations of the island from the 1830s to the early 1900s.

***'They Came to Mauritian Shores: The Life-Stories and History of the Indentured Labourers in Mauritius (1826-1937)'*** is the result of seven years of part-time research at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Indian Immigration Archives, the Mauritius National Archives, the Civil Status Office, the National Library, the Registrar General's Department, the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture, and in 36 Mauritian family collections. It makes an important and original contribution to modern Mauritian national historiography and also to the social history of the indentured workers in Mauritius.

*"Recent research is trying to look at the [indentured] labourers not as the 'other', but as emanating from within Mauritian society. They are not faceless and nameless strangers with an immigrant number. 'Their' history is our history. It is the history of where we have come from, how we lived and what became of us. Their lives had an impact on their children and on us, their descendants. It is on their experiences, good or bad, that we have built our lives, our present and the foundations for the future".*

-Dr. Vijaya Teelock, GOSK,

Associate Professor, University of Mauritius (UOM) & Founder and Coordinator of the UOM's Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture (CRSI) & Former Chairperson of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund

(The Vagrant Depot of Grand River, its Surroundings, and Vagrancy in British Mauritius, 2004).

ISBN-978-99903-88-33-6



9 789990 388336



Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund  
Quay Street, Port Louis.

Tel: 217 31 57 / 241 03 86

Fax: 217 24 81

Email: [aapravasi@intnet.mu](mailto:aapravasi@intnet.mu)

Website: [www.aapravasighat.org](http://www.aapravasighat.org)