

Résumé des communications

Satyendra Peerthum, historien AGTF

Departing Mauritian Shores": An Examination of Returning Indian Immigrants and Indo-Mauritians, Circular Migration, Savings, and Remittances taken back to India, 1860-1930."

This paper focuses on returning Indian Immigrants and Indo-Mauritians who left Mauritian shores for India and those engaged in circular migration between the 1860s and the 1930s. It looks at the amount of wealth such as savings, remittances, and jewelry that the returnees and their Mauritian relatives took with them from Mauritius. It takes a close look also at who were the Indo-Mauritians who left their native land to emigrate to India. This paper demonstrates how between the 1870s and the 1920s the vast majority of returnees paid their own passages and looks at the amount of money they spent over the decades for their return passages. This paper argues how the passage money they paid was used to fund the return passages of immigrants who could not afford it therefore granted so-called free passages. It also argues that part of the money was even used to fund the Immigration Office or the Department of Immigrants between the 1870s and 1920s. Another aspect to be examined are Indian indentured workers who as labour overseers, sirdars, job contractors, and skilled workers made the passage from India to Mauritius more than once as some even brought their families and friends and settled in Mauritius. These themes are discussed in the wider themes of the accumulation of wealth, social and economic mobility of the immigrants, human agency, and how the immigrants worked the system of indenture to their social and economic benefits.

Keywords: Returning Immigrants, Circular Migration, Social-Economic Mobility, Immigrant Worker Agency, Savings, and Remittances.

Satyendra Peerthum is a Historian and responsible for the Documentation Unit 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. He is the former acting head of the technical unit of AGTF and a member of the International Scientific Committee and of the Secretariat of the Indenture Labour Route&Coordinator of the ILRP's Indian Ocean Regional Committee, the Nantes Indentured Labour History Project, and the La Reunion Indentured Labour Scientific Committee. He is also a part-time lecturer in history at the University of Mauritius, the Open University of Mauritius, and a Mauritian writer. Over the past twenty-two years, he has specialized in the study of indentured labour, south Indians, 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, France, La Reunion, South Africa, India and Zanzibar, Tanzania.

**Nidhi Singh Yadav, PhD Candidate
Department of History, Banaras Hindu University**

"Coolie' life: Indentured Returnees from Reunion"

My paper explores the questions of returnees and hence centred around the life of returnees; their life on plantations and after return their life in India until the termination of the all contracts in 1920. It will also deal on how they tackle all problems like social boycott, cast rigidities, cultural norms and moral values which were remain same in India but changed in colonies according to circumstances and after return they were not able to became the part of such life that they left behind. The system of indenture has been studied and debated from varied viewpoints, in spite of this there are certain aspects which have not yet been studied in any detail such as the indentured returnees. The understanding of the indenture system cannot be justified without having a thorough investigation of the returned labourers and their experiences. The critique of the indenture system was based on the life of labourers on the plantations overseas. In such assessment, the returnees' views were not taken fully into the account. Significantly a figure demonstrate that almost 50% of emigrants returned to their homeland until the 1880s. Almost 30% returned to their homeland from the entire period of the indenture system. Hence, it would be important to explore returned indentured labourers, their experiences, savings, repatriation and socio-cultural socks.

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Céline Ramsamy-Giancone, docteure en histoire,
Université de La Réunion

"Le commerce à petite échelle, une perspective évolutive pour les travailleurs sous contrat à la Réunion (milieu du XIXe siècle)

Au terme de leur contrat de cinq ans, les travailleurs engagés de La Réunion ont la possibilité de renouveler leur contrat. Certains décident d'ouvrir de petits commerces ou des simples échoppes. Cependant, dans une société cloisonnée au sortir de l'esclavage, cette possibilité reste compliquée. Les engagés doivent se libérer de tout contrat, mais aussi justifier de bien acquis durant leur période de labeur. Cette communication vise à montrer les procédures que les travailleurs ont dû suivre lorsqu'ils souhaitaient sortir des plantations de canne. À l'examen des sources archivistiques, on perçoit en filigrane la mobilité sociale de ces travailleurs du sucre, leurs savoirs-faires, et leur volonté de se créer un espace dans le milieu économique, au-delà des contraintes liées au système de l'engagisme.

Small-scale trade, an evolutionary perspective for the indentured workers in Reunion island (Mid-19th century)

At the end of their five-year contract, hired workers in Réunion have the option of renewing their contract. Some decided to open small businesses or simple stalls. However, in a society that was compartmentalized in the aftermath of slavery, this possibility remains complicated. The indentured workers had to free themselves from any contract, but they also had to justify the assets they had acquired during their period of labor. This paper aims to show the procedures that workers had to follow when they wished to leave the cane plantations. An examination of archival sources reveals the social mobility of these sugar workers, their know-how, and their desire to create a place for themselves in the economic world, beyond the constraints of the engagisme system.

Céline Ramsamy-Giancone est chargée de cours à l'université de La Réunion, certifiée de Lettres modernes et docteure en Histoire Contemporaine. Elle est l'auteure d'une thèse intitulée : Catholicisme et hindouisme populaire à l'île de La Réunion : contacts, échanges, milieu du XIXe-début du XXe siècle, sous la direction de Prosper Eve. Ses champs de recherche sont l'histoire religieuse, l'engagisme, et le patrimoine de l'océan Indien. Elle a publié plusieurs articles dans la Revue Historique de l'Océan Indien et participe régulièrement à des travaux au niveau international.

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**Ashutosh Kumar, Associate Professor, Department of History,
Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India**

Angaje : Women and the Violence on the Colonial Plantations

This paper focuses on the quotidian violence of the plantation regime faced by Indentured Indian women on the colonial plantations globally during the 19th and early 20th centuries. From 1830s, Indian men, women and children were brought up to different colonies by colonial planters as labour force under the indenture system for their sugar plantations. This paper explores the everyday life of indentured women who were brought on the sugar plantations across the globe on a contract from 1830 onwards through their petitions and argues that the violence on women was not only implied by plantation authorities but by male Indian indentured workers as well. Violence on plantations were in two forms: first, patriarchal which were related to control and domination especially in the context of Indian patriarchal mindset; and the second, colonial which were related to 'control' over the 'subject'. Each violence was related to intimacy i.e., closeness of people on plantations. While colonial violence was in terms of master-servant relations, the male Indian violence was in terms of imposition of the patriarchal norms on them. Hence, my paper highlights 'intimacy' as an important category to understand the plantations space as regime of violence.

Keywords: Indian indentured, Indians in the colonies, Intimacy and Violence, 'coolie' women

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Sheela Narayanin, doctorante en histoire, Université de La Réunion

L'histoire des femmes indiennes engagées à La Réunion dans l'habitation sucrière

L'invisibilisation des femmes dans l'histoire est ancienne et leur écriture est un travail de longue haleine pour l'historien(ne). Les préoccupations des archives se concentrant sur la force de travail et de production des hommes, peu de documents traitent de la vie des femmes subalternes en l'occurrence dans un contexte colonial. Les paradigmes de sexisme et de hiérarchisation des races, empruntés aux études féministes postcolonial, expliquent l'exclusion des femmes colonisées dans l'historiographie coloniale. Les femmes indiennes ayant migré, de l'Inde des castes à La Réunion une colonie française au XIXème siècle, dans le contexte de l'Engagisme, en cas de maltraitance, elles peuvent porter une plainte contre leurs engagistes ou contre les violences masculines, notre corpus constitué de plaintes déposées au consulat britannique, nous permet de mettre en lumière leur souffrances, leurs luttes et leurs conditions de travail dans l'habitation sucrière au XIXème siècle. L'analyse des rapports sociaux, au cœur de la recherche, révèle la pluralité des discriminations et dans ce sens les sources judiciaires viennent compléter notre étude, rapportant des bribes de leur histoire et réhabilitant leur mémoire.

The History of Indian Women Indentured in Reunion in Sugar Estates

The invisibility of women in history goes back a long way, and writing about them is a long-term task for historians. As archives focus on men's labour and production, few documents deal with the lives of subaltern women, particularly in a colonial context. The paradigms of sexism and racial hierarchy, borrowed from postcolonial feminist studies, explain the exclusion of colonised women in colonial historiography. Indian women migrated from the Indian caste society to Reunion Island, a French colony in the 19th century during the period of indentureship. In the event of mistreatment, they could lodge a complaint against their masters or against male violence, and our corpus, made up of complaints lodged at the British consulate, enables us to shed light on their suffering, their struggles and their working conditions in the sugar industry in the 19th century. The analysis of social relations, at the heart of the research, reveals the plurality of discrimination, and in this sense the judicial sources complete our study, bringing back fragments of their history and rehabilitating their memory.

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Babita D. Bahadoor, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund

The socio-economic mobility of women during the 19th century Mauritius

My research explores the socio-economic mobility of indentured women as entrepreneurs and landowners through commercial activities and land transactions such as sale, purchase and mortgage of assets. Gender analysis is an important aspect in the history of indenture as very few studies have been conducted with regard to same and helps appreciate the socio-economic achievement of those immigrant women who bravely crossed the kaala pani (black water/sea) with or without their spouse during the 19th century. This study tries to demonstrate how women became self-supporting through commercial activities and purchase of land, showcasing the long-exhausted journey of the typical Indian indentured labourer, immigrant or housewife to a more successful propertied and entrepreneur woman. The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a major restructuring of the Mauritian sugar industry, a process best exemplified by the grand morcellement¹ where many plantation-owners (...) started to subdivide their holdings and sell off small plots of land to Indian labourers, most of whom became cane farmers in their own right.

Babita D. Bahadoor is a historical researcher, a hobbyist photographer, writer and former parttime lecturer at the University of Mauritius. She has more than 14 years' experience in the field of research and has specialized herself in the history and heritage of Mauritius. She has published several articles related to the history of slavery and indenture in Mauritius, and is the author of "Bras d'Eau: The History of a sugar estate in Mauritius" which was published in 2019. Her ongoing research focuses on the transition from slavery to indenture in Mauritius, and global migration from past to present taking into consideration the socio-economic mobility of indentured labourers/ old immigrants, and ethnographic and demographic patterns of migration. She is at present working in the Research Department of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, a body corporate under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Culture which was created in 2001 to manage and promote the Aapravasi Ghat Site. She is also the Ag. Secretary and Member of the Indentured Labour Route Project (ILRP) and the Indian Ocean Committee of the ILRP

Kalpana Hiralal, Department of Historical Studies, Professor, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Sisters in the Struggle: Indenture, Apartheid and Resistance

This paper explores uncharted historical terrain, highlighting the contributions of Indian women and their descendants in the struggle towards non-racialism and equality in South African society. It maps indentured women's resistance during the colonial and post-colonial periods and their descendant's subsequent struggle and defiance against apartheid. Indentured women in Natal, challenged exploitative labour and sexual practices and were at the forefront of the Satyagraha campaign of 1913. In the post-1913 period, the descendants of indentured women fought another struggle: apartheid. This paper argues that descendants of indentured women played a pivotal role in the anti-apartheid struggle. They fought side by side with other racial groups, it was a collective endeavour and the involvement of Indian women in the liberation struggle, which has scant representation in literature, was significant. Drawing on primary sources and oral interviews this paper maps out how both indentured women and their descendants challenged both gender, social and political oppression thus highlighting the nexus between gender, migration and resistance and its implications for indenture legacies and histories.

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Expédite Laope-Cerneaux, écrivaine

Clotilde, une figure féminine entre servitude liberté

Ce roman a pour héroïne, Clotilde Balancourt, née au Plate dans les Hauts de Saint-Leu, petite esclave jusqu'à l'abolition en 1848. A l'âge adulte, elle devient matrone (sage-femme populaire) et exerce pendant plus de 60 ans auprès de toute la population des hauteurs de Saint-Leu. En 1922, alors très âgée, elle aide à la naissance de son petit-fils, son 1er descendant mâle né libre. C'est une héroïne aux pieds nus, sans crinoline, sans ombrelle, sans vêtements luxueux... Mais aussi de celles qui ont « fait » La Réunion. Au travers de Clotilde, le roman retrace la vie des affranchis de 1848, une masse anonyme de 62000 personnes. Elle est le prototype de ceux qui sont passés de la servitude à la liberté.

Clotilde, a female figure between slavery and freedom

Clotilde Balancourt, the heroin of this novel, was born a slave in Le Plate in the remote mountains of St Leu. She was kept in servitude until the abolition of 1848. When an adult, she became a midwife in popular areas among populations of the mountainous countryside of St Leu. In 1922, then an elderly, she helped her daughter give birth to her grandson, her first male descendant who was born free. She is a bare-footed heroin, with no crinoline, no umbrella, wearing no luxurious clothes... But of those who « made » Reunion. Through Clotilde, the novel depicts the lives of freed black people in 1848, an anonymous mass of 62000 people. She is the prototype of those who lived in servitude then experienced freedom.

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Jean-Philippe Watbled, Professeur émérite de linguistique, LCF
Université de La Réunion

« Engagisme et apport des langues de l'Inde dans les composantes du créole réunionnais »

L'objectif de cette communication est de déterminer quel est le rôle de l'engagisme dans la construction de la langue créole réunionnaise, sachant que toute langue comprend trois composantes centrales, qui sont la phonologie, le lexique et la grammaire. Le lexique est sans aucun doute la composante la moins structurée et la plus ouverte aux influences extérieures et aux nouveaux apports et, plus généralement, aux réalités dites extralinguistiques. Dans ce cadre, il convient de tenir compte des dates des différentes migrations, ainsi que des origines et des langues des populations dans la période de l'engagisme. On distingue les langues du nord de l'Inde, d'origine indo-européenne, telles que le gujarati, et les langues dites dravidiennes, telles que le tamoul. L'hypothèse proposée est que la genèse du créole réunionnais était déjà largement avancée avant le début de l'engagisme et que, dans ces conditions, c'est le lexique qui a intégré les apports des langues des travailleurs engagés, grammaire et phonologie étant déjà trop fortement structurées pour se modifier à ce stade. Néanmoins, on ne peut exclure le renforcement de certaines propriétés phonologiques dans la période de l'engagisme, étant donné la variété caractéristique du créole. Pour ce qui est du lexique, il est intéressant de se poser la question des domaines de la vie qui ont été les plus réceptifs aux apports des langues de l'Inde, sur la base de quelques exemples représentatifs ; en d'autres termes, on se demandera quels sont les champs lexicaux qui ont été privilégiés. La question statistique est également importante, notamment dans une approche synchronique du créole actuel. En effet, le nombre ou pourcentage d'unités lexicales impliquées est tout sauf négligeable. Enfin, ce sera aussi l'occasion d'une relecture de la thèse de Robert Chaudenson sur le lexique du réunionnais et de s'interroger sur le rôle respectif des composantes de la langue mentionnées plus haut, ainsi que sur la représentation que les locuteurs se font de leur langue et des composantes en question.

Indenture and Contributions of the Languages of India to the Components of Reunionese Creole

The aim of this paper is to determine the role of indenture in the genesis of Reunionese Creole, knowing that any language includes three central components, which are phonology, lexicon and grammar. The lexicon is undoubtedly the least structured of these components and the most open to external influences and new items and, more generally, to so-called extralinguistic realities. In this context, the dates of the various migrations, as well as the origins and languages of the populations in the period of indenture, must be taken into account. A distinction is traditionally made between North Indian languages, of Indo-European origin, such as Gujarati, and the so-called Dravidian languages, such as Tamil. The hypothesis which is put forward is that the genesis of Reunionese Creole was already well advanced before the beginning of indentured labour and that, under these conditions, it was the lexicon that integrated the contributions of the indentured labourers' languages, grammar and phonology being already too strongly structured to be modified at that stage. Nevertheless, one cannot exclude the strengthening of certain phonological properties in the period of indenture, given the characteristic variation in Creole. As far as the lexicon is concerned, it is interesting to ask which areas of life have been most receptive to the contributions of Indian languages, on the basis of some representative examples; in other words, we may ask ourselves which lexical fields have been privileged. The statistical issue is important as well, especially in a synchronic approach to present-day Creole. In fact, the number or percentage of lexical units involved is anything but negligible. Finally, it will also be an opportunity to re-visit Robert Chaudenson's thesis on the lexicon of Reunionese and to question the respective roles of the above-mentioned components of the language, as well as the representation that speakers have of their language and the components in question.

Jean-Philippe Watbled est Professeur émérite de l'Université de la Réunion et membre associé du Laboratoire de recherche sur les espaces Créoles et Francophones dont il a été le directeur. Auteur d'une thèse de phonologie générale, il est titulaire d'un PhD de l'Université de Bath (Angleterre, 1986). Ses études et travaux couvrent plusieurs domaines, tels que la linguistique anglaise, française, romane, générale et comparative, la typologie des langues et la créolistique, et portent sur les structures phonologiques et syntaxiques d'un nombre important de langues appartenant à différentes familles historiques. Il a aussi publié de nombreux articles sur les textes anciens et les langues anciennes (latin, grec classique), ainsi que des travaux de philosophie. Parmi ses publications récentes, on note ses Essais de créolistique indianocéanique (2021). Il prépare actuellement plusieurs ouvrages, notamment Réflexions exégétiques entre linguistique et philosophie et Langage, langues et discours, images de la variété, et deux de ses contributions sont à paraître chez De Gruyter et aux Classiques Garnier.

Jean-Philippe Watbled is Professor Emeritus at the University of La Réunion and an associate member of the Laboratoire de recherche sur les espaces Créoles et Francophones, of which he was the director. In 1986, he was awarded a PhD by the University of Bath for a thesis on general phonology. His studies and work cover a broad range of topics, such as English linguistics, French, Romance, general and comparative linguistics, language typology and creolistics, and concern the phonological and syntactic structures of a large number of languages belonging to different historical families. He has also published numerous articles on ancient texts and languages (Latin, Classical Greek), as well as works in philosophy. His recent publications include Essais de créolistique indianocéanique (2021). He is currently preparing several books, including Réflexions exégétiques entre linguistique et philosophie and Langage, langues et discours, images de la variété, and two of his forthcoming contributions are to be published by De Gruyter and Classiques Garnier.

Résumé des communications

Govindin Sully Santa

Docteur en histoire en linguistique et en créolistique

Le bal tamoul réunionnais : performance et dynamique de créolisation

Les danseurs de bal tamoul de la troupe de l'Est miment ici le rôle des maîtres du savoir en accompagnant le « Dieu de l'Intelligence » sur la scène théâtrale du ballet indien. Le spectacle a eu lieu dans les quartiers désignant la périphérie des villes dans l'Est de l'île. La troupe Rickmouni assurait le spectacle encore désigné « bal malbar ». Cette introduction préalable autorise les acteurs à développer leur répertoire en continuant par exemple sur une pièce liée ici au Râmâyana avec l'intitulé « kosslévin Ramayanon », ou encore « Kusa Lava Râmâyana » en mettant en exergue les enfants de Sita et Râmâ. Le vartial réputé A. (fils d'Apave M.) assurait alors le spectacle théâtral dans les années 1990 à Saint-André. Notre intervention sur le bal des engagés et de leurs descendants s'organise en quatre parties : une performance théâtrale réalisée dans le temps présent dans le Sud-Ouest de l'île avec un vartial ou maître de ballet qui réalise une prestation artistique du bal malbar en 2019 à Saint-Louis, le constat d'une dynamique langagière avec l'insertion de la langue créole dans les scénettes pour la communication entre le public, les acteurs et le metteur en scène encore désigné vartial, l'importance grandissante de la langue créole dans les prestations des ballets indiens tant dans les récits que les discours, une historiographie d'après les recherches publiées sur l'art du ballet indien: nous mentionnons diverses données rédigées sur la tradition théâtrale des engagés. Nous présentons 26 notices bibliographiques sur le théâtre en langue tamoule désigné nadagam.

Nadia Vingadessin, Docteure en sociolinguistique et chercheure associée Celtic-Blm Rennes 2

Fenêtre sur un héritage linguistique pluriel et pluriculturel à dominante tamoule

Ouvrir une fenêtre sur l'héritage linguistique pluriel de La Réunion en évoquant la langue créole, nécessite un petit voyage dans le passé. L'histoire de la colonisation, de l'esclavage, des engagés permet d'expliquer la naissance et la composition de ce parler. Le créole, un élément à la fois unificateur ou clivant, au sein de la société réunionnaise, est issu d'une mosaïque ethnique. L'accent sera mis ici sur les apports lexicaux d'origine malgache et tamoule. Ce parler créole engendre également divers comportements linguistiques. Quelques anecdotes contemporaines pourront les illustrer. L'autre volet de notre communication laisse entrevoir l'art tamoul et permet de mettre en exergue un des aspects prédominants de notre héritage pluriculturel. Nous choisissons de mettre en lumière les travaux d'un artiste réunionnais des années 60/70, qui témoignent d'une foi jamais ébranlée par les années difficiles et les astuces d'époque les plus insolites qui l'aident à concrétiser ses œuvres.

A window upon a diverse linguistic and multicultural heritage with a Tamil dominant feature

Opening a window upon the diverse Reunionese linguistic heritage by evoking the Creole language requires a little journey into the past. The history of colonization - slavery and indentured labour, helps to explain the birth and composition of this language. Creole, both as a unifying or divisive element in Reunionese society, comes from an ethnic mosaic. The lexical contributions of Malagasy and Tamil origins will be emphasized here. This Creole spoken language also gives rise to a variety of linguistic behaviours. A few contemporary anecdotes will illustrate them. The other section of our speech gives a glimpse to Tamil art and highlights one of the predominant aspects of our multicultural heritage. We have chosen to focus on the works of a Reunionese artist from the 60s and 70s, an unshaken faith throughout his difficult years and the most ingenious methods he would use to bring his work to life.

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**Stéphanie Folio-Paravéman, docteure en ethnomusicologie,
Université Côte d'Azur**

Musique et engagisme : le cas du tambour malbar

D'origine indienne, le tambour malbar est un instrument de musique qui, à La Réunion, est utilisé dans le cadre des manifestations religieuses hindoues notamment depuis le XIXe siècle. Si ce tambour relève aujourd'hui d'une pratique musicale qui s'est largement créolisée dans l'espace réunionnais, cette créolisation est loin d'être un phénomène récent ; en effet, le passage entre le monde indien et le monde indo-réunionnais représente une transition au cours de laquelle se produit un certain nombre de circonstances qui expliquent, voire favorisent le développement de la place qui reviendra au tambour malbar dans le champ symbolique et religieux insulaire. À cet égard, les conditions de pratique des rites d'origine indienne à La Réunion dans le courant du XIXe et jusqu'au début du XXe siècle vont s'avérer être déterminantes dans l'orientation et l'évolution de ce tambour en milieu rituel. En quoi le tambour malbar est-il révélateur d'une musique de l'engagisme ? Au cours de cette communication, nous tenterons d'y répondre en proposant un examen de la situation historique de ce tambour, dans le but de mettre en avant les particularités de son insularité.

Chand Hariduth Ramgoolam, Director, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund & Former Advisor, Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage & Ex-Vice-President of the Rotary Club of Flacq

Gauging the Pulse of our Mauritian Cultural Heritage: Exploring, Preserving, and Disseminating our Indentured Labour Heritage in the Republic of Mauritius

This paper focuses on the historic and heritage value of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, other indenture sites, and initiatives over the past two decades to preserve and promote them among Mauritians and tourists. It examines the arrival of the indentured workers, the establishment of the indentured labour system, and the Immigration Depot or Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site in what is known as the success of the Great Experiment in Mauritius and the modern world. This paper looks at the establishment of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and how over the past twenty years it has examined, preserved, and disseminated the importance of important indenture sites like the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, Trianon Barracks, the Vagrant Depot, Bras d'Eau, Flat Island, Antoinette, and Forbach. It also discusses how AGTF, as the only government department dedicated to indentured labour, has and is implementing programs and projects and the way forward for the near future. It also demonstrates how this small, but dynamic government department has made the Mauritian people aware of the importance of the history of indentured labour and how the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site has become a cornerstone of our Mauritian cultural heritage and contributes to the process of nation building 55 years after our independence.

Keywords: Indenture Sites, Indentured Labour and Labourers, the Great Experiment, Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, Preserving, Disseminating, AGTF, and Cultural Heritage.

Résumé des communications

Céline Ramsamy-Giancone, docteure en histoire
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Engagés indiens et malgaches entre marronnage et vagabondage

L'esclavage à La Réunion est indissociable du marronnage, phénomène de fuite des individus hors d'un système jugé cruel et oppressant. Lorsque ce système est aboli officiellement en 1848, le travail sous contrat suppose le recrutement d'individus « libres » soumis à des règles d'engagement et des lois spécifiques et différentes. Or les sources judiciaires font surgir des faits de fuite et d'arrestation d'engagés indiens et malgaches, dont la gestion par les autorités coloniales se rapproche des procédures appliquées pour les esclaves marrons. En nous appuyant sur les pratiques judiciaires et l'usage d'un lexique commun, cette communication propose d'illustrer la proximité entre esclavage et engagisme durant la période de transition.

Indian and Malagasy indentured between marronage and vagrancy

Slavery on Reunion Island is inextricably linked with maronnage, the phenomenon of individuals fleeing from a system deemed cruel and oppressive. When this system was officially abolished in 1848, contract labor required the recruitment of "free" individuals subject to specific and different rules of engagement and laws. Judicial sources reveal the escape and arrest of Indian and Malagasy indentured servants, whose management by the colonial authorities was similar to that of maroon slaves. Based on judicial practices and the use of a common lexicon, this paper proposes to illustrate the proximity between slavery and indenture system during the transition period.

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Caste on the plantations: Dalits' Life under the indenture

Although a substantial corpus of ethnographic and sociological work exists on metamorphosis of caste practices in diasporic Indian communities, but if we compare we do not find an equally great amount of work done on diasporic Dalits. This relative absence of Dalit diaspora in academic discourse is a gap that has to be filled. Analysis has not been done sufficiently to notice the perilous existence of Savarna dominance in the larger caste-class nexus that reins the narratives and experiences of Indian identity, history and culture in the global setting. Consequently, what we get is the Dalit diaspora being marginalised. Furthermore, in the conventional academic works, "diaspora" is overwhelmingly expressed as a homogeneous grouping. But it's clear that the Indian diaspora is not a monolithic whole. Replicating and reflecting the Indian society, it is also divided on caste lines. Hence, an in-depth analysis to locate caste as a causal factor is the need of the hour. The intention of this paper is to focus on Dalit experiences and lives in the Indian diaspora. Much accentuation has been put on the repositioning of societal confines, probing the various methods and means that migration allowed girmityas to liberate himself from family burdens, stringent socio-economic structures, and caste prejudices. Despite the intense ache that migrants must have felt on separating from their families, communities and country, they chose to leave. Conditions must have been so bad that they considered the option of uprooting themselves over staying in their home country.

Résumé des communications

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Forbidden Freedom” : A Profile of Vagrant Children and Young Boys in British Mauritius, their Imprisonment, and Denial of their Rights Between 1879 and 1907

This paper focuses on one of the largely overlooked themes of research when looking at the history of the indentured labourers in Mauritius, namely the experiences and lost archival voices of the vagrant children and young boys, their imprisonment, and the denial of their rights. It shows how between the 1870s and the early 1900s, hundreds of indentured children and young boys, ex-indentured children and even Indo-Mauritian children and young boys who were often orphans were arrested by the local colonial police. They were imprisoned at the Vagrant Depot, the Port Louis Prisons, Beau Bassin Central Prison, Government Reformatory and the rural vagrant depots and prisons. This largely forgotten subaltern social group within the Indian indentured and Indo-Mauritian population were regularly mistreated, sentenced to serve prison sentences, and denied their rights while, at the same time, others filed complaints, show resilience, and resisted. Through the little-used sources of the MGI Archives vagrant registers, this paper explores how they were also placed in the Orphans’ Asylum in Pamplemousses and they were between 12 and 17 years old. The 28 volumes of the PH series of Mahatma Gandhi Institute’s Indian Immigration Archives contain the only complete surviving vagrant registers with the pictures and the bio-data of several vagrant children and young boys. This research paper examines 18 important and specific case-studies of vagrant children and young boys who were arrested by the colonial police between 1879 and 1907. Many among them were sentenced a serve one to three months sentences at the Vagrant Depot and in the other rural depots or to be restored to their employers or someone else who was ready to give them work. These case-studies provide an important picture of the vagrant children and young boys who were often repeat offenders during the 1880s and 1890s and how they were also able to use the system to their advantage and showed clear signs of human agency and resistance as they were being forbidden their freedom and individual rights.

Keywords: Vagrant Children and Young Boys, Subaltern Group, Imprisonment, Rights, Freedom, Vagrant Depot,

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Creating livelihood Opportunities to Reduce Migration of Rural Women : The Sakhi Exprince in India

Pratidhwani initiated its project named “SAKHI” in March 2016 in Kushalgarh, a small town in Sothern Rajasthan and plan to expand its operation to neighboring districts in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh in future. The Women are the target group both because they are the most marginalized and because women tend to use resources more productively than men do. That is, they tend to invest the majority of their income in the household and for their children, and they tend to undertake small, manageable activities rather than risky ventures that could bankrupt families. By providing skill enhancement training and small business loans to women, SAKHI has seen a rise in household income that has benefited the entire family, thus positively impacting local economy. The organization trains women to be self-reliant by equipping them with hands on training in sewing, embroidery, clay art, soft toy making, Mehandi designs etc. In a short span of time since its inception SAKHI has made commendable progress. It has become a household name not only in the township but also in the nearby villages. Within 8 years, SAKHI has trained 400 girls and women belonging to different social groups. Over three hundred of nineteen hundred women received advance training in stitching on specialized cloth material with fashionable contemporary Rajasthan style cloths. Those who have excelled in learning have been given sewing machines and small loan to start their own ventures. The success of SAKHI is evidenced by the fact that its model has been replicated by a few other organizations as well i.e. Dharohar, Meenakshi etc. SAKHI look upon these newborn outfits as its younger sister organizations with similar mission. To overcome these threats, SAKHI monitors student and community soft & hard data survey as a feedback system to internally & externally monitor the pulse of organization and its impact.

Résumé des communications

Armoogum Parsuramen, ancien ministre de la culture de l'île Maurice, Chevalier des arts et des lettres et Satyendra Peerthum, historien.

À la recherche de nos ancêtres, une présentation historique et picturale et un hommage à la migration et l'établissement des Indiens tamouls à Maurice et leurs descendants (1728 au temps présent et dans d'autres parties du monde »

In searh of our ancestors : A historical and pictorial presentation and Tribute to the tamil indian migration and Settlement in Mauritius and their descendants

Ce livre historique a été lancé par la Fondation Armoogum Parsuramen pour marquer le 294e anniversaire de l'arrivée des artisans et esclaves tamouls de l'Inde sur les côtes mauriciennes, le 11 novembre 2022, et le 188e anniversaire de l'arrivée des travailleurs indiens sous contrat à l'île Maurice, le 2 novembre 2022. On estime qu'entre 1728 et 1930, plus de 150 000 artisans indiens tamouls, des passagers libres, y compris des marchands et des négociants, des esclaves, des hommes, des femmes et des enfants sous contrat ont atteint les rivages de notre petite île paradisiaque de l'océan Indien. La majorité d'entre eux étaient les quelque 107 000 travailleurs sous contrat indiens tamouls qui sont arrivés à l'île Maurice britannique entre 1826 et 1910. Ce livre novateur retrace essentiellement l'histoire sociale longue, complexe et épique de leur migration, de leur installation et de leurs descendants dans la construction de l'État et de la nation mauricienne sur une période de près de trois siècles.