

SOUTH ASIANS: SLAVERY & INDENTURE



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Abstract

Britain was the most powerful nation in the world in the early nineteenth century, ruling the world with a vast colonisation system that stretched from the South Pacific to the Caribbean, creating the world's largest empire. However, there is a forgotten chapter in history, a story and struggle of over a million people dispatched to the farthest reaches of the British Empire under the guise of "Indenture Labour," secretly enslaved, bound by contracts they couldn't read or understand, with no idea where they'd been taken, what the purpose of their long journey was, and whether they'd ever be free. Unfortunately, the majority of them were unable to find their way back home. Slavery is not just linked with the black race; it is also the story of millions of South Asians who were first put into hellfire and tormented like animals as slaves, and subsequently condemned to serve British plantations under the guise of 'Indentured Labour. Slavery and indentured labour were the same things. It was a somewhat modified kind of oppression, with the lives of ordinary people being ignored and taken for granted as usual.

Title: South Asians: Slavery and Indenture

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the early 19th century, Britain was the most powerful nation in the world, ruling the world with a widespread colonisation system ranging from South Pacific to the Caribbean, the largest empire world has ever witnessed. However, there is a lost chapter in history, a story and struggle of over a million people dispatched to the farthest shores of British Empire, under the name of 'Indenture Labour, secretly being enslaved, bounded by contracts they could neither read nor understand, without knowing where they've been taken, what's the purpose of their stretching voyage, without knowing, whether they will be ever returned to their native country. Wretchedly, most of them couldn't make their way back home.

It's a story with no elements of joy, but a tale of misery, exploitation, injustice, abusive power, and ravenousness. It is considered as one of the major movements of the 19th century, sophisticatedly disregarded from historical records with only a few evidences available today.

Beginning with Christopher Columbus' ill-fated journey, European expansion into the Caribbean firmly linked the sugar industry, the black population, and the plantation complex. This connection has lasted five centuries, sparking a heated discussion regarding the worth of the excessive local reliance on sugar production vs. the plantation complex's social and economic benefits.

English planters first began growing sugarcane in Barbados in the 1640s, using a mixture of convicts and prisoners from the British Isles and enslaved people from Africa. Sugar agriculture was very profitable and it quickly spread throughout the Caribbean and to Louisiana and Mississippi in North America. Hundreds of thousands of enslaved men, women and children were brought from Africa to the Caribbean and America so that Europeans could have sugar and rum, the main products of sugar cane.

If we focus on these two paragraphs, we can clearly notice the link between black African slaves and sugar plantations in the Caribbean. This has been long reported by most of the documents on slavery in the Caribbean and the world. However, the reality was much more complex and involved other races of people such as South Asians in the case of sugar plantations in the Caribbean. This research highlights the role of South Asians in the Caribbean sugar industry of the British Empire and how they were treated like slaves under the title of 'Indenture labour'.

In the 2nd chapter of this book, the historical aspects of slavery will be discussed. It mainly focuses on the diverse antiquity of slavery, what it is referred to and how slavery is not only associated with Black Americans, but a curse that other nations, including South Asians, Chinese, and other European nations had to suffer from.

Whereas, in chapter number 3, the background of the slave trade will be covered thoroughly. Starting from Arabia, then Dutch, French, the United States and Britain a brief history of the slave trade is mentioned in these sections along with a few other regions. This chapter will help readers understand the fundamentals of slavery, its demand and the nature of work these slaves were used for. Moreover, in the last section of the same chapter, some of the details about the slavery abolishment act has also been covered, it also includes impacts of slave emancipation on South Africans and the British, Dutch and French planters.

Then in the 4th chapter, the emergence of Indentureship has been discussed at length. What were the ground requirements of importing indentured labour from India, its policies, implications and impacts on both the planter class and the labours themselves!

Moving forward, chapter number five will shed light on the origin of sugar production and its detailed process in the West Indies. Moreover, the significance and applications of sugar or what the British called "The White Gold" will be discussed. Rum production and its impacts will also be covered alongside, some legal modification concerning the right of immigrants working on sugar plants as well as the effects of Indian Indentureship on overall Caribbean colonies.

The later chapters (6th, 7th and 8th) tell us about the consequences of indentureship, its implication, details about Windrush and its fate, a few stories of the survived indo-Caribbean Immigrants and their heirs who are looking for their forefathers in India to the date.

Finally, the research will be closed in chapter number 9th with final notes of details covered in the entire book. Enjoy reading!

Chapter 2: How Slavery Is Misunderstood!

What is slavery? Why do people choose to be enslaved? Whether they have a choice? Is slavery only associated with the black race? Is slavery legal in the modern age? What is the difference between slavery and indenture labour?

These are a few questions you need to elucidate in your mind in order to comprehend the history of slavery and indenture law, their similarities, differences and impacts in a broader picture. Slavery is generally referred to as a legal right of a person, entity or organisation on another person, for life or a defined period of time. Most people consider slavery being a trait or historic element associated with African Americans only. But as a matter of fact, the concept and veracity of slavery are much deeper, widespread and complex than being associated with a single race.

The custom of slavery was prevalent in almost every civilisation including, the Roman and European Empire, however, the slavery ratio was reduced in Europe in the Early Middle Ages. Whereas, during centuries of warfare in the Mediterranean, both Muslims and Christians enslaved each other after conquering a certain region, mainly western and Central Asians, Indians, and Eastern & Northern Africans were enslaved during this time.

West Asia, North Africa, and Southeast Africa were the hotbeds of the Arab slave trade. The Ottoman slave trade used the human resources of eastern and central Europe, as well as the Caucasus, while the Barbary Coast slave traffickers attacked Europe's Mediterranean shores, as well as the British Isles and Iceland. Slavery was progressively abolished and repressed in Muslim states in the early twentieth century (post-World War I), primarily owing to pressure from Western governments such as Britain and France.

Slavery was abolished in the Ottoman Empire in 1924, when the new Turkish Constitution dissolved the Imperial Harem and made the remaining concubines and eunuchs free citizens of the newly declared republic. Slavery was abolished in Iran in 1929. Slavery was abolished in Mauritania three times: in 1905, 1981, and again in August 2007. Under British persuasion, Oman abolished slavery in 1970, while Saudi Arabia and Yemen abolished slavery in 1962.

The Dutch, like other European maritime nations, were early to get involved in the transatlantic slave trade. Approximately half a million Africans were carried across the Atlantic by the Dutch between 1596 and 1829. A large number of people were transported to the Caribbean islands of Curaçao and St. Eustatius. However, the majority of the Africans that arrived were later trans-shipped to Spanish territories. As a result, the two islands served as staging areas for the resale and shipment of Africans who had survived the Middle Passage to other American slave colonies.

Since around 1778, the French were bringing some 13,000 Africans to the French West Indies as slaves each year. Slavery had existed in French colonies since the early 16th century, but the French government did not officially recognize it until the Revolutionary Convention in 1794.

Subsequently, Europeans conquered the major parts of the world and ruled all across the globe, establishing their colonies everywhere, also enslaving a diversified group of people from every region, with various backgrounds, races, ethnic and cultural bases. Besides, French, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese were also prominent colonisers of that time and major kingdoms enslave multiple groups of people including Indians, African Americans, Chinese, and South Asians. These Imperial kingdoms along with British Empire played a key role in the Atlantic slave trade after 1600.

With this history in mind, there remains no ambiguity in understanding that slavery is not just associated with black race, but it is a tale of widespread, aching and gloom of millions of South Asians as well who first were thrown into hellfire and treated like animals as slaves, and later destined to serve British planters in the name of 'Indentured Labour'.

Indenture Labour was not any different from slavery. It was a slightly modified form of oppression with the life of a common man being neglected and taken for granted as always. After the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1833, the sugar planters in the Caribbean were perplexed, not knowing how to proceed with the massive sugar production without slaves or cheap labour. They were looking for people who do not have any aim in life and the ones who do not mind selling their lives for a few bucks. There is another thing to be clarified in order to understand

why the British government had to select Indians for the new slavery system when they had thousands of Africans serving them already. It will be discussed in the next chapter at length.

You can never predict how cunning the minds of businessmen can be. The sugar industry was thriving magnificently, revenue was increasing day by day. The new and hungry machinery required massive workforce to be functional optimally. Hence, they got Indenture Law passed by the government in 1838, and continued migrating South Asian women, men and children for crushing labour at the cheapest rates. Indenture law is one of the biggest exploitations of human rights which engulfed lives of over 1 million Indians, with them being barely mentioned in the course of history. You will find details of indenture law, its foundation, and impacts in the later chapters.

Chapter 3: Background

As discussed earlier, slavery is not only associated with South Africans but almost every race in the world. And if you map out the transportation of slaves for sugar production only, it will help you understand how deep-rooted this dilemma is.

From Guinea to Arabia

Sugar, which originated in New Guinea, reached new heights when it was manufactured in the Arab world until 1500. In this region of the planet, the temperatures were ideal for its development. They were able to improve the technique of refining it in sugar mills, because of the availability of this good, allowing it to expand. At the time, the Arab nations had an excess of sugar all over the world. It was "in enormous plenty, especially, for the wealthy people of Arabia, but an expensive product and typically in low supply in others" as compared to other parts of the world.

From Arabia to Brazil

Sugar found its way to Portuguese Brazil following the Arab invasion. In 1550, it seemed that an estimated 38.3 percent of Rio de Janeiro's population was made up entirely of slaves. This mass slavery expanded over the rest of the world, including the United States. It is frequently forgotten, but slavery also lasted much too long in Brazil, with many people still suffering from a lack of opportunity to this day. Well, labour demand for sugar production increased with the sweet good's demand exceeding expectations.

Transportation of Slaves in Cuba and France

When it came to enslaved labour, Cuba had the same difficulties as Portuguese Brazil. "Cuba's enormous area and wealth of natural resources made it a perfect site for it to become

a thriving sugar producer," However, slavery was finally abolished in Cuba, despite the fact that the country prospered due of the sugar industry. Cubans weren't the big supporters of slavery, therefore, they eventually abolished it before several other colonial empires.

Now, let's talk about France, the world's third largest slave trader at the time, also participated in slavery to meet the demand for sugar.

The French practiced what was known as the circuit trade, in which "French ships filled with commercial goods travelled to Africa, where the commodities were swapped for slaves." These slaves were then swapped for sugar and other goods. What distinguishes France from other countries is that they did not utilise slaves to work the fields. Enslaved Africans were viewed as good in the trading system in which France was participating. Because the environment in France made it difficult to cultivate the product.

Barbados Also Joined the Adventure

Barbados joined in the production of sugar as a good with oppressed labour in the 1600s. Barbados developed a plantocracy civilisation because of the great need for sugar. Changes in the way sugar were sought and received in Barbados did not occur until the 1800s and 1900s. The hue of one's skin determined whether or not they were an enslaved worker. Whites were not allowed to labour in these areas, but individuals of white and African American heritage were allowed if their complexion was pale enough.

With population growth and economic developments in other nations, socialist measures in Barbados were thought necessary. Changes in their resources and governments allowed individuals who had previously been subjugated by sugarcane cultivation to finally be granted rights that had previously been denied to them. Many individuals in Barbados are still trying to make ends meet today, and cannot avail of various opportunities due to their past record.

How Dutch Participated in The Process!

Instead of trafficking slaves and manufacturing sugar in the Caribbean, the Dutch went abroad. Sugar may only be cultivated on the land if certain conditions are satisfied. The Dutch grew

sugar in Suriname, and slaves produced it. In Suriname, many slaves left the terrible conditions in search of a better life, but they were unsuccessful. Despite the fact that slave labour wasn't very profitable for the Dutch, they clung to the belief that it would improve their way of life in the long run. The Netherlands was one of the last European countries to ban the practice.

Sugar Production in the United States

However, the United States did not benefit from slave labour in other nations, but instead imported slaves home to work in the country. Slaves were utilised considerably more in the United States than in other countries because of the environment. They also worked in other fields, such as cotton, in addition to the ones they had at home.

By the 1800s, the slave population had more than quadrupled in the United States. Those who wanted to profit from a good that was not regarded as vital for life caused this to happen in the United States. Due to the fact that slavery was an exported task, other countries, such as England, have had a far simpler time rectifying the wrong of slavery than the United States. Millions of individuals in the United States are still suffering from the injustices caused by the slave trade.

Slave Trade and Sugar Production in British Colonies

If you don't pay for labour for a long time in business, you can get extremely wealthy very rapidly. In their perspective, white Europeans have long adored black Africans. For years and years, or generations and generations, white Europeans have adored them as labourers.

They've always wanted them to work for them; the problem is that they've never wanted to pay them. Never intended to compensate them for their efforts. They were always something I desired, but I never wanted to pay for them. This is how a group of people may accumulate money and pass it down through the generations. The Caribbean and the Americas were the starting points. Undoubtedly, British Empire was thriving by leaps and bounds by the end of the 19th century, the only thing that didn't work for them was the minds of some liberals who spoke up for their rights and the rights of their fellow beings. For the British planter class, things were

going very well, sugar, cotton, coffee, and tea being the staple products for their economic growth. It's awful and amusing at the same time, how western countries who could manage very well without sugar were compelled to be addicted to this slow poison by their very own people.

Various factors contributed to the rise of the slavery abolition campaign, fluctuating Britain economy, and the introduction of a new system of international commerce on top of all. Moreover, the British government was unable to compete with other plantation economies including Brazil and Cuba at that time. Merchants raised their voices against British monopolies held by Caribbean colonies and insisted on free trade. Not only that, the fear of slave uprising and the inescapable struggles of African slaves also added up to the entire campaign.

Legal Pressure on British Empire

Since the 1770s, British abolitionists have aggressively fought the transatlantic trade of African people. In fact, several abolitionist petitions launched in 1833 alone received 1.3 million signatures. Such antislavery sentiments expanded to Upper Canada (later Canada West), and prompted the passing of the 1793 Act to Limit Slavery in the region.

Abolitionist efforts in the eastern provinces of Québec (Lower Canada at that time), Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, on the other hand, had failed. Pierre-Louis Panet, for example, proposed a measure in the National Assembly in 1793 to abolish enslavement in Lower Canada, but the issue lingered for several sessions and was never voted on.

Various groups and individuals actively participated in slavery trade abolition campaign, they were men and women from all fields of life. Majorly, they were writers, MPs, freed slaves, and artists. The freed slaves not only contributed in the implementation of law, but also prevailed awareness about the sufferings experienced by slaves, especially, on plantation sites. Thomas Clarkson, Alexandra Falconbridge, Olaudah Equiano, William Cowper, Elizabeth Heyrick, John Newton, Toussaint Louverture, Mary Prince, William Wilberforce, and Greenville Sharp, were some of the most prominent abolishment campaigners who with their struggles, got slavery abolishment law into shape.

British parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act on August 1, 1834, freeing over 800,000 slaves in South Africa and Caribbean. The act outlawed the buying, selling, and owning humans as property in all of its colonies across the globe. For African Americans, 1st August is a day more valuable than 4th July, it was celebrated with joy and enthusiasm until the emergence of civil war.

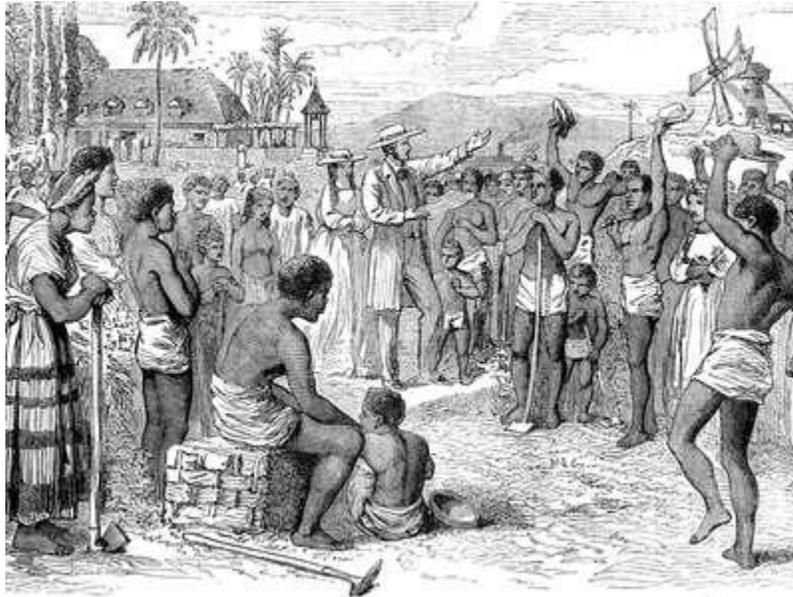


Figure 1 Slavery Abolition Act, 1834. Source: (Henry, 2021)

How Fruitful the Slavery Abolishment Act Proved to Be...?

The act didn't uprooted slavery entirely, but was successful in many aspects, liberating not more than 50 African slaves in British North America. The law stated that slaves will be retained by their former owners for four to six years as apprentices, whilst, children under the age of 6 were declared free. To compensate for the damage suffered by Slaveholders, the British government made available £20,000,000, however, none of the slaveholders in British North America received any money. As far as the damage suffered by slaves is concerned, no compensation money was reserved or promised. The Act also established Canada as a free territory for enslaved African-Americans. Between 1834 and the early 1860s, thousands of refugee slaves and free blacks came on Canadian soil.

How Planter Class Treated Their Slaves?

As a result of the inflow of enslaved Africans into the New World, "*acts for controlling the Negroes*" were created. Slave laws created by island legislatures reveal a lot about how enslaved Africans were treated and how slavery was practised in the Caribbean colonies. These laws, of course, established legal norms that were not always observed.

To crush opposition and "domesticate" the enslaved Africans, the planters used an endless array of cruel and unlawful tactics. Many such practices, however, were sanctified by legal backing: a majority of the landowners' Civil Rules and Codes authorized for the corporal punishment of slaves. Planters in Barbados enacted draconian rules allowing them to punish slaves found guilty of crimes.

Planters were required to keep slave cabins under tight supervision under laws created to safeguard the planter community from the continual threat of slave insurrection. Slave possession of weapons, firearms, or any other kind of aggressive armament was severely banned by the planters. Mutiny, insurgency, or revolt were dealt with even more harshly.

If a slave owner accidentally maims or kills a slave while beating the victim, the slave owner faces no penalty. If tried and found guilty of acts like as stealing or destroying property, the slave was to

"Be publicly and feverishly beaten with forty Lashes." If the slave committed the same act again, they may have "His or their Nofes flit, and be branded in the forehead with a hot Iron, so that the mark thereof remains. If the slave was found guilty a third time, that Negroe or other slave for that Third Offense, fhall be condemned and fuffer Death'.

" If a planter has a Negroe who is continually running away, he is authorized to equip him with an iron yoke that has three long hooks extending from it to prevent his future escapes," according to the law. Such regulations were especially significant in Jamaica, the most populous of the British West Indies, and an island where the Maroons of the Blue Mountains provided a viable alternative to the plantation. These extensive slave laws were necessary for

the Jamaican planter to create terror in the slaves' minds and prevent them from fleeing. The planter's daily agenda was dominated by fear.

Role of Enslaved Women in British Caribbean Sugar Plants

Historically, women are always considered to be fragile and inadequate, although it was not true for the women working on sugar plants in West Indies. Before the abolition of slavery, women gave their blood and sweat for the sugar production. These enslaved women worked shoulder to shoulder with men in all the labour work. In such critical environment with unsanitary practices, malnutrition and spine breaking work many women lost their ability to reproduce, to conceive a child more precisely. Well, this worked in favour of the planters for whom buying a new African slave was much easier than taking care and raising a child.

Therefore, it's not surprising to see why these enslaved women in the Caribbean had a very small number of children, and the one they had used to die at a very young age due to evident factors. It's written in the diaries of one of the Jamaican planters Thomas Thistlewood that there were 153 pregnancies recorded over the period of thirty-seven years, and there were only 121 live births. Unfortunately, about fifty-one of these children died before the age of seven that make one out of three ratios. Jennifer Morgan wrote the everyday loss of children was one of the hidden traumas of slavery. In these circumstances, we can analyse that enslaved women's pregnancy experience was full of grief, pain, and poor health with neglected physical needs and a decent childhood for their kids.

The causes of these high rates of miscarriage and infant mortality are still being discussed, but it is evident that the work environment women faced, which required extremely intense physical activity in conditions of poor nutrition, had a significant impact. The vast bulk of this activity was agricultural. Enslaved women were mostly engaged in harsh manual labour, such as producing sugar and other commercial crops. Although sugar was not the only product cultivated in the Caribbean, it was the cause for the colonies' existence and the primary source of revenue. Sugar estates housed over 60% of all enslaved persons in the Caribbean.



Figure 2 : Woman carrying a child, Trinidad, c.1830s. Source: (Paton, n.d.)

How Children Were Treated in the Caribbean Colonies?

Children, like adults, were unwitting participants in the slave trade, which came from a number of places. As a result, children were frequently enslaved as prisoners of war. Women, children, and the elderly were particularly vulnerable when males were slain in war. Those who were not slain or forced into slavery were sold.

Military expeditions were regularly accompanied by commercial caravans, who waited patiently to trade textiles and commodities for captured soldiers. Kidnapping was a common technique of obtaining children in various parts of West Africa. Children were kidnapped while working in the fields, wandering on the outskirts of town, or playing outside without their parents' knowledge.

Enslaved Africans were mostly imported from West Africa and used on plantations across the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. With an average lifespan of five to seven years, demand for African slaves surged in the 18th century, prompting traffickers to get their supply from the continent's interior.

Impacts of Slavery Abolition Act on Planter Class

The 1700s were the golden years for the planter class all over the world. They ruled slaves in whatever manner they wanted to. Some of them even considered slaves less human, having more similarities with horses than humans. There was no limitation for punishments nor check

and balance neither any concept of human rights. However, in the 1800s planter sector witnessed its decline, with slaves standing up for their rights and liberals (men and women from every walk of life working as abolishment campaigners), struggling together for slave trade obliteration.

1800s was a ground-breaking period of slave emancipation across the islands of the Caribbean, quite long before it reached the United States. British liberal campaigns worked as a catalyst in the abolishment of the slave trade in 1808. The government then regulated slavery in all of its colonies. The regulations include registration of every slave in order to keep a record of birth and mortality, and imposing limits on punishments as well. Of course, these implementations were offensive for the planter class, since they did not like the idea of the government executing rules and regulations across the ocean. Also, they can clearly see the decline of their self-operated kingdom for that matter. It will not be wrong to say that emancipation changed the lives of plantation owners forever. Gradual changes had been witnessed from 1834, until 1837 and 1838 in British colonies during the apprenticeship period.

Even after Slavery Abolition Act, it was not that easy for ex-slaves to live freely. Many of the planters did not employ ex-slaves, unless at extremely low wages or under extremely slave like conditions. Meanwhile, illegal slave trade remained persistent, and some of the planters were actually relieved after the abolition law. They came up with a point that they feared and opposed abolition in the beginning, but are relieved now since they did not have to use flagellation as the best way to get maximum work from slaves.

The First British Empire had a unique functional identity thanks to the mercantilist era's independent and competitive imperialisms, and the British system advanced through successive stages of commercial and industrial capitalism ahead of others. However, separating the transition of a slave labour system in the British colonies from later processes elsewhere is artificial, and this is made all the more unacceptable by the general decline of mercantilism, the progressive spread of free trade and laissez-faire principles, and the concurrent substitution of a world-wide and intensifying capitalist system.

Yet, the majority of the planter class opposed abolition law and defended the need for slavery through their economical charts. They pointed out that paying wages to ex-slaves or appointing labours for the same job is going to affect the economy gravely. Some more issues the planter class had to face were, Because of absentee ownership, estate managers mismanaged the estates they were in charge of. Moreover, Planters had borrowed much from British merchants and were unable to repay their debts due to low returns. Many people continued to borrow in order to resurrect their plantations. Banks and commercial companies, on the other hand, were hesitant to lend to West Indian planters. The Bank of British Guiana and the Planters' Bank of Jamaica no longer wanted to utilize estates as collateral for loans, and the Colonial Bank of the West Indies made no large loans to planters. Shortage of a consistent, relatively inexpensive supply of labour after liberation, there was a mass migration of ex-slaves from farms in the more populous colonies.

Therefore, the planter class was not ready to employ ex-slaves at better wages and petitioned the British government to allow additional indentured labourers from Africa and Asia to enter the country. This concept became the foundation of Indenture Law 1838.

Chapter 4: Indentured Law

After the last French wars, there were also significant slave rebellions in the British West Indies: in Barbados in 1816, British Guiana in 1823, and Jamaica in 1831-32. All appear to have had similar socioeconomic goals, with Haiti serving as a popular model. They all failed, partially because to political uncertainty among the rebels, but primarily because colonial administrations, aware and terrified of the Haitian example, and no longer preoccupied by war, were readily powerful enough to subdue them.

It has taken a long time for modern analysts of the West Indian slavery system to acknowledge what were probably empirical commonplaces for practical planters, recognized by at least some contemporary writers on plantation management: that it was self-interest for planters to provide incentives as well as punishments for slaves; that allowing slaves opportunities to produce their own food was self-interest for planters; and that allowing slaves opportunities to produce their food was self-interest for planters.

However, the slavery emancipation movement in 1833 proved to be a massive turning point for the planters of the West Indies. After the Act of Emancipation 1833, Slavery Abolition Act was passed by the British government in 1834. The implementation of the law freed over 665,000 slaves working in the Caribbean. In addition to this, slavery was abolished in Danish (1848), French (1848) and Dutch in 1863 from the Caribbean. You can see how a single law turned the tables for planters all across the globe who now, was eagerly looking for some cheapest fill-ins to keep their business running. Knowing the fact that the imperial political economy majorly depends on labour-intensive agriculture, dominatingly the sugar production was the economic backbone of the British Empire.

Meanwhile, the emancipation of the slaves was provoked by emotions of liberty and basic human rights that eventually became the biggest crisis of 19th century for the planter class. For the planters abundant land and cheap labour seemed to be the only route to success. Although, as discussed earlier, most of the plant owners didn't hire their ex-slaves may be due to grudges, ego issues or God knows what. Well, some of them did hire their ex-slaves but at extremely nominal wages with slave like behaviour being persistent.

Besides, the Chinese labour migrated towards the Indian planters, leaving Caribbean planters in despair. This heterogeneity added immense cultural and genetic variations in the existing colonial societies. However, despite all of the cultural diversity and stuff none of them proved to be suitable by planters for employment, of course, they must have had their own reasons. The major cause of not selecting them was planters' greed for money and God like rights. All they wanted was complete control, and cheapest workforce, people who can live and die for the pleasure of their masters.

Migration of Indian Indenture Labour to Mauritius

Mauritian society was hierarchically constructed in a high pyramid of power and riches when the British arrived in 1810. At the bottom was a large population of Black slaves, Madagascans, Mozambicans, and others brought in from all across the Indian Ocean basin! In the middle was a small class of craftsmen of mixed ancestry, and at the top was a tiny White elite of French ancestry made up of landowners, merchants, officials, and professionals. Indian indentured labourers who came on plantations after slavery was abolished found themselves at the bottom of the food chain. For their part, the British relied on the landowning Franco-Mauritians' collaboration to effectively administer the island, providing them with security and markets for their commodities in exchange.

The expansion of sugar production as the colonial economy's economic mainstay, the abolition of the slave trade, and the high mortality rates among slaves (which easily outnumbered their birth rates) resulted in a severe labour shortage on the island, to the point where planters were looking for alternative sources of labour even before slavery was abolished. The first wave of indentured labourers arrived at the colony in 1834, totalling 75 people.

The Act for the Abolition of Slavery in the British Empire was enacted into law in 1833 and went into effect on 1 February 1835 in Mauritius. The Act established an "apprenticeship system" that was in force from the date of abolition until it was terminated in 1839 due to fears of an apprentice rebellion. A healthy financial injection of £2 million was put aside to compensate Mauritian owners for the loss of their slaves, a good capital infusion that was spent in the growth of sugar production.

Migration of Indian Indentured Labour to the Caribbean

After witnessing a huge success in the immigration of Indian indenture labourers to Mauritius, John Gladstone (father of a reputed British Statesman) and a planter in British Guiana wrote a letter to the agency of Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co. in Calcutta, the same firm which had systematically recruited and shipped labourers to Mauritius, his agenda was to make inquiries about migrating the same sort of labour to the Caribbean. This is what the agency wrote back;

“We are not aware that any greater difficulty would present itself in sending men to the West Indies, the natives being perfectly ignorant of the place they go to or the length of the voyage they are undertaking” (Spooner, 2020)

It was a huge deal for Britain, India and the Caribbean, since after the Act of Slavery Abolition things were not that simple as before. To cover the process smoothly, several administrative and legislative measures were taken that were sporadically modified over the period of next eighty years. There is different opinion about the exact year of Indian Labour arriving the Caribbean, from some resources its 1836, while a majority of historical resources agrees with 1838 the exact year of Indian Indenture immigration to the Caribbean.

A civil contract between Britain and Indian labourers was written up for an initial duration of five years under a program established by Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies. The labours were confined to their farms and given a meagre daily wage of one shilling. Any violation of contract resulted in an automatic penalty of two months in jail or a fine of £5. It will not be wrong to say that Indians were treated much as enslaved Africans had been, inhumanely and cold-bloodedly.



Figure 3 Contract to import Chinese labourer. Source: (Turner, n.d.)

Indenture Law- A New System of Slavery

In 1838, a special magistrate, Charles Anderson, wrote to the Colonial Secretary, stating that "with few exceptions, they [the Indians] are handled with severe and unreasonable severity, by overwork and personal chastisement." According to historian Hugh Tinker, "the rotting bones of immigrants were regularly unearthed in cane fields...." If labourers did not work, they were not paid or fed, and they died of starvation.

Over a half million Indians were imported from 1838 to 1917 including men, women and children. Various colonies were ceased for further shipment due to inhumanely behaviour of planters. For instance, St Croix's Danish colony was so brutal with the workers that Indian government ceased their contract of labourer shipment after a single voyage. Other colonies also had to get through such blocks on and off, but the system kept running till 1917.



Figure 4 Coolie Ship loaded with Indian workers booked for the Caribbean. *Source: (Wikipedia, n.d.)*

Why Indians Were the Best Fit for Indenture Work?

There were numerous push factors that made Indians (South Asians) a perfect fit for indenture labour in the Caribbean. One of them was the successful import of immigrants in Mauritius that encouraged West Indies Sugar Planters to ingress labourers from India through Calcutta and Madras Indenture agencies. As far as the concept of choice is concerned, for instance, some of us might think why Indians chose this intensive labour? Why they agreed upon migrating to a faraway land without knowing the consequence. Well, number one, yes! They literally weren't aware of the consequences, moreover, consecutive famine, relocation of local industries, and snowballing unemployment were some of the most prominent factors that compelled Indians to sign up for the contract. Those people were ready to sell themselves off for an unknown journey, to an unknown place, for an inhumane sort of labour just to put food on their plates.

In fact, some of the Indians in Caribbean claim that they were migrated by deception, they were misled by not being informed about the true terms and conditions of the indenture agreement. On the other hand, there were no such evidence of scam found in the legal documents. However, we can analyse how illiteracy could have played key role in the entire process. So, that's how the fate of over a half million South Asians were written by Caribbean Planters and British government.

The major portion of expenditures of systematic recruitment and migration from India to the Caribbean were handled by local colonial governments, and planters had to pay a significant share of these costs. Emigrant Agencies sought recruits all across the Indian countryside under license from the protectors of migrants in Madras and Calcutta.

These Emigrant agencies recruited the labour systematically and geographically. In the early years, they selected the men, women, and children from tribal areas and urban peripheries. In later decades, rural hinterlands were the recruiting sites. Try to imagine it as far as you can! Imagine a sponge being squeezed till the last drop of water dripping out of it, that's how the British planter class extracted people from India to serve them at wages inconsiderable insufficient, and unjust. Therefore, Indenture law is referred to as a "New System of Slavery".

From 1861 to 1906 the migration of Southern and North-East Indians was ceased significantly. Prejudice with Southern Indians was the chief reason behind this. The Indians migrants towards French colonies were mostly Tamil-speaking South Indians. Whilst, the majority of Indians moved to Dutch and British colonies were from what is now Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar.

The voyage from India to the Caribbean generally took three to four months on ships carrying almost 510 migrants. These migrants were recruited from a diverse range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The average sex ratio was three males to one female and most of them were in their twenties. Despite of the unhygienic conditions, malnutrition and poor management, cholera was an alarming issue faced by the Indian indentured ship named "Coolie".

Impact of Indian Indenture Labourers on Caribbean Colonies

Indians left an unmistakable mark on the Caribbean environment during the system's 82-year run, not only in terms of their economic position as the fabled "saviours" of the sugar industry, but also in terms of their social, cultural, and emotional presence. The system was abolished in 1920, ushering in a new era for Indians who had chosen to make the Caribbean their home, especially because they were no longer bound by the Indian indenture system's laws, regulations, and limitations. These indentured slaves worked as employees on various plantations and then as migrants beginning on the difficult path of settling in a strange land, the Caribbean.

Girmitiyas- The Other Name of Indentured Labourers: The term "Girmitiyas" or "Indentured Labourers" refers to Indians who left India in the mid- to late-nineteenth century to work as labourers in British colonies, where the majority eventually stayed. The word GIRMIT is a slang term for "agreement." A "Girmitiya" was a labourer who emigrated under the Girmit Agreement.

Migration of Grimitiyas to Fiji

Indentured labourers from all across India were originally transported to Fiji to work on sugar cane plantations. A total of 60,000 Indians came in Fiji between 1879 and 1916. Around 25,000 of these were repatriated to India. Some Indians, primarily from the regions of Gujarat, Sindh, and Punjab, came as free immigrants from 1900 onwards.

Since the early 1960s, Fiji Indians have been immigrating to the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. These were mostly economic migrants, and their numbers grew steadily in the 1970s and 1980s, reaching over 4000 each year.

Fijian Indians have been enslaved for 37 years and have suffered numerous human rights violations during military coups. They were frequently abused by the military, which contributed to their decision to relocate to Canada, Australia, and the United States. A brighter future was another incentive for many talented Fiji Indians to migrate to other nations. Fiji lost a large number of skilled employees as a result of this. Furthermore, many Fijian Indians aspired to a higher level of education, widening the divide between them and the indigenous Fijians.

Chapter 5: The Process

English planters first began growing sugarcane in Barbados in the 1640s, using a mixture of convicts and prisoners from the British Isles and enslaved people from Africa. Sugar agriculture was very profitable and it quickly spread throughout the Caribbean and to Louisiana and Mississippi in North America. Hundreds of thousands of enslaved men, women and children were brought from Africa to the Caribbean and America so that Europeans could have sugar and rum, the main products of sugar cane.

If we focus on these two paragraphs, we can clearly notice the link between black African slaves and sugar plantations in the Caribbean. This has been long reported by most of the documents on slavery in the Caribbean and the world. However, the reality was much more complex and involved other races of people such as South Asians in the case of sugar plantations in the Caribbean. This research highlights the role of South Asians in the Caribbean sugar industry of the British Empire and how they were treated like slaves under the title of "Indenture labour".

The Sugar Process

Sugar cane is said to have been originally grown around 2000 years ago. Christopher Columbus brought it to the Caribbean in the late fifteenth century. Sugar is the greatest employer of labour, employing about 50,000 people directly. Furthermore, the sector has enormous potential for energy generation and the creation of small, high-value fermentation and sucrochemical businesses, because to its renewable agricultural raw material basis. Beginning in the early 16th century, the slave trade, dubbed "White Gold" by British colonists, was the engine that transported millions of Africans to the Americas. Sugar cane plantations developed as cash crops by European superpowers permanently changed the history of every nation in the Caribbean, most of South America, and sections of the Southern United States. However, in modern days Brazil produces more sugar than any other country in the world, despite the fact that the crop has never grown wild in the Americas.

More than 10 million Africans had been forcefully transported to the New World and divided across the sugar fields of Brazil and the Caribbean by the mid-nineteenth century.

A third of Europe's economy depended on sugar over those three centuries and it was by far the most significant foreign commodity. By diversifying plantation outputs and improving efficiency, sugar barons from St. Kitts to Jamaica became extraordinarily wealthy.

Britain and France had a huge impact on the map of America throughout the 17th century because of their sugar-rich possessions.

Sugarcane was an unusual plant to cultivate. Europeans were accustomed to producing crops such as wheat, which they would then harvest and send to others to mill into flour. Enslaved labourers, on the other hand, had to do everything on Caribbean and American plantations. They seeded, tended, and harvested the crop, then worked to extract the juice from the sugar cane, boil and process it to convert it into sugar and molasses, and eventually work to extract some of the waste products into rum. Enslaved men, women, and children worked long days all year on the sugar plantation, which was a farm and a factory.

There are photographs from this time period that depict sugar farming and production. However, we must keep in mind that the artists who made these images were attempting to make the system appear more appealing: they were defending slavery and attempting to persuade people in Britain that it wasn't that horrible. As a result, we cannot take these photographs at face value, and we must always keep in mind how difficult this task was. Once they were strong enough, young men and women joined the First Gang in their late teens, but the severe work destroyed their bodies within ten or twelve years, and they were reduced to the Second Gang, which worked hard but not as hard as the First Gang. After approximately twenty years in the Second Gang, a person now around 40 years old would appear old and worn out and would join the Third Gang (the 'Grass Gang'), which weeded the crops and harvested weeds and grass for animal feed. All of these operations were overseen by white owners and overseers, and work was organised by enslaved "drivers." Whips were used by overseers and drivers to force enslaved people to work harder.

Cane-holing was exhausting labour. Slaves from the Gang first marked out 4 to 6-foot squares, then dug each square to a depth of 6 to 9 inches. They only used hoes instead of spades, which made the job even more difficult. Each day, a First Gang slave was expected to dig out 60 to 100 squares, involving the movement of up to 1,500 cubic feet of soil. The soil that was

removed was used to create a bank around each square. Two young sugar cane plants were then planted in each hole, and slaves from the First and Second Gangs carried large baskets of animal manure to the squares on their heads, covering each plant with enough manure. The slaves despised this task since it was both difficult and filthy. Two holes could be dug with one huge basket of dung carrying up to 80 pounds of manure (four sugar cane plants). One acre of sugar cane plants could use up to 1.25 tonnes of manure.

Weeds grow swiftly in the Caribbean, and if left unchecked, they will quickly outcompete and destroy other plants and crops. Throughout the year, the Third Gang's elders and children weeded sugar cane fields and set traps and pursued the thousands of rats that relished eating the immature sugar cane plants. Enslaved persons who captured and killed the most rats were rewarded by certain white masters.

When it came time to harvest sugar cane in February or March, the plants were frequently taller than a human. The men and women of the First and Second Gangs wielded curved knives known as 'bills' (billhooks). The First Gang's men and women had to frequently bend over and cut through thick sugar cane that was roughly six inches off the ground. They then cut the top and leaves off the cane with the bills. Slaves from the Second Gang would bundle the canes and load them onto wagons.

The canes had to be processed soon after harvesting because the juice inside the cane would deteriorate and become unusable if left for too long. As a result, the slaves of the First and Second Gangs worked harder than ever throughout the harvesting and boiling season (February to April). The sugar mill and boiling house on large plantations operated 24 hours a day, six days a week. The slaves of the First and Second Gangs were separated into two groups, with the first working 12 hours during the day and the second working 12 hours at night before repeating the cycle.

The canes were transported to the mill (which may be powered by wind, animals, or humans). Enslaved men fed the canes back and forth between the rollers, which crushed them and enabled the juice to flow into collecting pans and then to the neighbouring boiling house through pipes. Because these workers were frequently fatigued, they did not always let go of the sugar cane in time, and their arms were pulled into the rollers; when this happened, an axe

was used to chop off the crushed arm; some plantations had one-armed individuals who had experienced this fate.

In the Boiling House, the juice flowed down into a big storage tank. It then flowed into the largest copper vat or bowl, where the sugar juice was cooked by fires below the bowl. As it boiled, skilled men and women stirred it and skimmed the surface. When the juice had been sufficiently reduced and cleaned, the Boiler, a highly experienced slave, decided that it was ready to be ladled into the next, slightly smaller copper vat, where the process could begin again. This happened four or five times, and the cane juice got darker and thicker with each transfer.

One gallon of cane juice can provide around one pound of muscovado (semi-refined brown) sugar at the end of the process. When the cane juice was in the final vat, the Boiler sensed it was going to crystallise and tempered it with lime juice before transferring it to an unheated cooling vat. It was transferred to clay pots once it had cooled sufficiently, and molasses was drained out of them several days later through holes in the bottoms of the pots. The molasses was transported to a spirit or still house, where it was distilled into rum. Semi-refined sugar was left in the pots, which was dried in the sun, packaged, and shipped to Europe and America.

How Sugar Production Moved from South America to the Caribbean!

Although the Portuguese Empire initially controlled the sugar trade in the Americas, the Dutch–Portuguese War would result in a change that would have ramifications for the sugar trade in the Caribbean, notably rum manufacturing (made from sugar cane juice). In 1630, the Dutch captured Recife in Pernambuco in what is now Brazil (the Dutch dubbed it New Holland when they assumed control), which had some sugar plantations operated by African slaves who had been brought to the region earlier.

Some slave plantation owners were Cristo-Novo, or "New Christian" Sephardic Jews compelled to convert to the Catholic Church. Because the Portuguese Inquisition was active and the Dutch Calvinists were typically more tolerant of Jews, they were pleased to side with them over the Catholic Portuguese and remained in the area operating their considerable

sugar-oriented slave trade. In 1636, they even established the first public synagogue in the Americas, the Kahal Zur Israel Synagogue.

The advent of sugar culture, during the colonial period, had a significant influence on the Caribbean's society and economy. It not only skewed the slave-to-free man ratio, but it also raised the average size of slave farms. Slaves were used extensively on early sugar plantations because sugar was seen as a cash commodity with economies of scale in production; it was most effectively cultivated on vast estates with many employees. Slaves were transported from Africa and forced to labour on the plantations. Prior to 1650, for example, more than three-quarters of the inhabitants of the islands were of European origin.

Some Prominent Environmental Impacts of Sugarcane Industry

As the sugar cane business expanded in Caribbean countries, it had a negative influence on the environment,

- Forest degradation,
- Water contamination,
- Loss of fertility,
- And soil erosion was among them.

The Dominican Republic in the 16th century, the Lesser Antilles in the 17th century, Jamaica and Haiti in the 18th century, and Cuba and Puerto Rico in the 19th century all had similar issues.

Even though these countries have taken steps to mitigate the effects of the sugar revolution, some still show signs of what Reinaldo Funes Monzote, the Caribbean and Latin American environmental historian, describes as a "serious deterioration" of the natural environment with socio-economic consequences, water pollution and irrigation issues were the most highlighted ones among them.

Rum Production in the Caribbean

Although there are historical tales of rum-like beverages in the Far East, the drink we know as rum developed as a by-product of the sugar trade in the colonial West Indies. Those labouring on sugar plantations discovered that fermenting and distilling molasses created alcohol in the 17th century, and so modern rum was formed.

Some rums are made from sugar cane juice rather than molasses, which preserves more of the natural tastes and commands a premium price. Other areas of the world developed their own fermented sugar-based beverages independently of the Caribbean, but Caribbean rum came to dominate — mostly because to its position in the 17th century global economy dominated by colonial European powers.

Rum expanded quickly across the colonies, including colonial North America, India, Canada, and Australia, and was even involved in certain historic events. When the governor of Australia sought to limit the consumption of rum in what became known as the Rum Rebellion, mutinous Australians took control of the government. In North America, George Washington's inauguration in 1789 featured a barrel of Barbados Rum.

Until 1970, sailors in the British Royal Navy were given a daily rum ration or tot. According to tradition, following the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, the Royal Navy put Admiral Nelson's newly deceased body in a barrel of rum to preserve it for the journey home.

The rum was used to buy slaves from African chiefs, who then sent them to the Caribbean to harvest sugar cane, which was then converted into molasses and rum, which was then shipped back to Africa to buy more slaves. This practice continued for many years. There was no trade to be had without rum in Sierra Leone by 1725, according to British traders. On the coasts and in the European forts, gallons of rum and gold was used to pay for slaves.

Rum- The Triangular Trade

By the late 17th century, Caribbean rum was booming export commerce and part of the triangle trade, in which molasses was shipped to New England to be distilled into rum. After then, rum was carried to West Africa and swapped for slaves, who were subsequently sent to

work on sugar plantations in the Caribbean. On the voyage, an estimated 30% of slaves perished.

"Kill devil" is certainly an apt description of early rum, which was used to subjugate slaves. But as the quality of rum improved, it began to be exported globally. But in order to safeguard their indigenous spirits, Britain and France banned its importation from the rest of the world.

Molasses was then brought to the new American colonies and distilled, establishing America's first commercially manufactured alcohol, and creating a demand for rum that exists to this day in the United States.

Rum's popularity in America fell over the nineteenth century, as a result of limits on sugar imports and the emergence of American Whiskey. At the same time, the Caribbean sugar industry began to dwindle as a result of the ultimate abolition of slavery as well as Napoleon's instigation of sugar production from beets. The column (continuous) still, developed by Aeneas Coffey in 1831, was brought to the Bacard Distillery in Cuba in 1889, and the quality of rum continued to increase. Bacard employed these stills, as well as chosen yeast strains and filtering technologies, to create the clear, light rums for which they are known.

Sugar Duties Act - 1846

The sugar industry of the British West Indies faced a difficult period from 1845 to 1855. In the previous eleven years, one had observed the emancipation of slave labourers in the British West Indies in 1834, as well as the failure of the Apprenticeship System, which was meant to make the transition from slave to free labour easier in these colonies. No other period in the history of the British West Indies has been as turbulent as the post-emancipation decades.

The whole economic and social framework of these colonies was flipped upside down within a few years as the plantation economy deteriorated altogether. The abolition of slavery in 1830 led to a worsening of international economic conditions for planters in the British West Indies, which persisted through 1860.

Overproduction of sugar was caused by the fast growth of new plantation areas in countries such as Cuba, Brazil, Mauritania, and East India. But beet sugar, produced at a considerably

cheaper cost using contemporary industrial processes, was becoming a serious threat to the Caribbean's sugar output.

Before 1846, these colonies lacked new technology, but the Sugar Act made it even more important for the British aristocracy to enhance their techniques. The cost of producing sugar was already expensive, but sugar colonies in the British West Indies were protected since they paid fewer taxes in the British market than Spanish and French sugar producers, and their sugar was guaranteed to be purchased in Britain. However, following the abolition of slavery and apprenticeship in 1838, this advantage was progressively lost.

That year, the British West Indies sugar sector received a blow when the Sugar Duties Act of 1846 forced sugar prices to be equalized as well as sold at a cheaper price. As a result of these levies, the West Indies had been a protected market against competition. This act was a warning sign of impending doom, yet it harmed the sugar business rather than destroying it. There were enormous protests by planters in West Indies who were opposed to the Act, fearing that free trade would lead to their economic destruction. On the British market in 1854, colonial sugar was no longer protected by the British government.

Many British West Indian plantations struggled with increased costs of production and lower yields due to the lack of technological innovation. In order to compete in an open, global market, as was the notion of free trade, these colonies had to radically restructure sugar production in order to do so.

The Sugar Duties Act of 1846 hastened the downfall of an industry that had already been struggling from a variety of other factors. The older colonies, such as Jamaica, Antigua, St. Vincent, and Grenada, saw the most deterioration in the British West Indies. This development satisfies the demands of European clients for free trade and the ability to buy sugar from the lowest vendor.

From that time to the modern days, the sugar process has evolved enormously.

Why Sugar Was Termed As “White Gold”?

Sugar is a lot more than just expanding waistlines and causing cavities, as it turns out. While it's doubtful that many candy-lovers in the United States consider history while consuming an estimated 100 pounds of sugar each year, sweets previously played a key part in one of history's darkest periods.

Well, we have already discussed and further going to dig deeper into the historical impacts of the sugar industry on slaves, indentured labours and planter class. For now, let's discuss some interesting facts about sugar that will light up your mood and boost your brain energy to continue reading the dreadfully tragic history of this "white gold"

Let's get started!

Sugar was initially brought to England in the Middle Ages as a spice via the fabled Silk Road trade routes across the Middle East. That's because it was mixed up with exotic spices like ginger, saffron, and cinnamon which were only available to the rich.

In food, sugar is most commonly used as a sweetener, but its uses don't end there. When used as a preservative, sugar can prevent food from deteriorating. You'll be able to keep the food's colour, flavour, and texture. It also prevents the growth of microorganisms, prolonging the shelf life of canned products.

Sugar was primarily used as a medication in ancient Greece and Rome. Also, it was introduced to England as a spice as well as for its purported medical benefits to cure anything from fever and cough to chapped lips, chest illnesses and stomach disorders, it was utilised in the middle of the 12th century. Moreover, in the modern age cocoa, coffee, wheat, cotton, and sugar are the five most successful soft commodities in terms of yearly consumption.

Depending on the source, either sugarcane or sugar beet can be used to manufacture sugar. About three-quarters of total output relies on the former. Statistically, sugarcane has a higher output volume than sugar beet for a variety of factors, including climate and production costs. These elements are inextricably linked. The favourable tropical environment of Thailand, China, Brazil and India makes them significant sugarcane growers. When compared to sugar beet, this environment gives a significantly longer production time. Europe and the United States produce the majority of sugar beet.

Amazed by the facts? Well, they definitely are astonishing! So, now you know why sugar was a white gold for British planters, all they eyed was massive revenue, and honestly, they achieved it very well. But behind these negligible factors and all the useful benefits lies untold stories for misery, cruelty, pain and slavery. Just like rats and beetles used in laboratories millions of people were enslaved and forced to work on these sugar plants with inhumanely treatment and work that never seemed to be ending. Not only that, the story is not about slavery only. The cycle of cruelty remained persistent even after the abolishment of slavery in the form of “indenture labour”. And this time, South Asians (now called Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis) were the victim. South Asians were brutally exploited under strict rules and policies of indenture contractor, and their lives by any means were not better than slaves.

You might be thinking about the silver lining in these darkest chapters of history, that the Africans were now free and ready to embrace their independence wholeheartedly. Sadly, that's not the case too. Slavery abolishment may have eased their lives a bit, still, South Africans were consistently oppressed and treated as slaves even in the late 19th and 20th century.

But if we particularly focus on indentured labour, then it's the lives of South Asians that was at stake, even now, there are thousands of Indian families whose forefathers worked in the Caribbean at sugar manufacturing plants and, they are still struggling to know what actually happened there, how their grandparent's life was and how they survived such hardship circumstances under such inhumane treatment. Some of the stories will be shared in the further chapters.

For now, let's map out the impacts and consequences of indenture law on South Asians and planter class, and how the course of history changed gradually.

Chapter 6: Indentureship Consequences

The earliest indentured workers to arrive in the Caribbean were Chinese. Because of the impending abolition of slavery (which occurred in 1807), the planters feared losing their labour force. Due to the decrease in sugar production in China, tea was introduced as an alternative. The Caribbean was home to around 18,000 Chinese workers from Canton, China.

From 1853 to 1879, British Guiana (now Guyana) had 15,720 Chinese immigrants. From 1860 to 1893, there were 4,845 Chinese workers in Jamaica. Martinique (1859) and Guadeloupe (1859) each had 500. (1854 to 1887). Nevertheless, Cuba, which had the biggest number of Chinese immigrants, was the country that had the best success with Chinese migration - 34,834 in 1861, which was 2.5 percent of the population and increased to 3 percent in 1871.

The Chinese labourer transit was highly expensive, and these immigrants were prone to disease, which resulted in a high death rate for the Chinese labourers. Another reason for leaving the estates quickly was so that the Chinese could set up their own enterprises. They continued to be imported by the planters as a means of displacing African slaves. Africans were brought back to the Caribbean after Chinese immigration failed. Since the Africans refused to labour because they believed that Indentureship was too similar to slavery, this was a complete failure.

The Caribbean was home to roughly 39,000 Africans who came from West Africa between 1835 and 1917. Since the countries will still be dominated by blacks, they would eventually unite. Africans were brought back to the Caribbean after Chinese immigration failed. Since the Africans refused to labour because they believed that Indentureship was too similar to slavery, this was a complete failure. Plantation slaves were likewise unlikely to desire anything to do with plantations following emancipation, because they had finally achieved their long-awaited liberation. This angered the whites, who demanded that more whites be imported into the Caribbean. Around 5,000 whites from Europe and 2,000 from North America migrated to the Caribbean. This was done to establish a primarily white population and even out the black-to-white ratio. They believed that if there were more blacks than whites, the blacks would acquire power and independence more quickly.

Cross-breeding of blacks and whites was prohibited, yet this did not prevent these relationships from happening. It is possible that they received higher contracts because of their race. Following the completion of their contracts, they would pursue commercial prospects. As a result of this, about 41,000 Portuguese from Madeira were also transported. Syrians and Lebanese, on the other hand, were less well-documented, as they presumably travelled in small numbers. It took a lot of bribery to get all of the folks listed above to travel to the Caribbean as indentured servants. As a result, the Indians were the only tribe that possessed definite push forces.

Indian Indentureship and Its Consequences

Four hundred and thirty thousand Indians fled to the Caribbean from Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. There were several push forces in India, including the collapse of industry, a decrease of agriculture, caste system and taxation as well as poor wages and the 1857 rebellion. As a result of kamiuti, the impoverished in Bihar sold their own and their children's services for a profit. South Indian pariahs (untouchables), pannaiyals, and padiyals (lower castes of agricultural labourers) sold themselves and their children into lifetime debts in order to escape their oppressive social status.

Droughts and famines were also common, destroying harvests. The terrible 1840s famine in Upper India drove early migrants to migrate overseas. Emigrants frequently came from the most densely populated areas, where crop failure may bring some communities to near-starvation. There was increased suffering during times of drought, low harvests, and a series of famines. Emigration from India was motivated more by the fear of hunger than by the lure of greater pay in the colonies.

On the other hand, the rural economy changed often, and peasants lost their land or plunged into bankruptcy or catastrophe. On the other hand, there were the inherent sufferings faced by some marginalized populations, as well as the unavoidable occurrence of periodic drought or famine. The caste system was an extremely repressive and rigid social structure.

The trip from India to Trinidad by sailing ship was lengthy and took 3 to 4 months. As a result, there was a continual worry of flames at sea, as well as the possibility of a hurricane or

disaster. Epidemics of infectious illnesses and outbreaks of sickness were common. They ate cooked rice since the vegetables and fruits would often deteriorate, like on the Moy from Calcutta to British Guiana in 1904, which resulted in beriberi. To decrease high mortality rates, early immigrants were housed in insufficient quarters, which had to be extended still, 25 percent would die.

The influence of British colonial control on the Indian economy and society was variable and continues to be debated. One thing is certain: the transition from an agrarian (agriculturally centred) lifestyle to a competitive capitalist economy would be dramatic. Large local landowners and moneylenders obtained legal rights on people to secure debt payments under new taxes and land-holding regimes.

This resulted in greater land loss and fragmentation, and therefore pauperization. According to official accounts, the majority of immigrants departed Calcutta in 1858, following the Mutiny of 1857. Some of the insurgent indigenous and civilians made their way to Trinidad. The indentured labourers had contracts that ranged from 5 to 10 years. They were promised repatriation, but because this was too expensive, they were allowed to buy land once their sentence expired as a deterrent. They were entitled to a living salary, housing, and health care, all of which were to be provided by the estate owner. For 45 hours per week and 54 hours during the harvest season, workers laboured on sugar or cocoa estates. A 30-minute break was provided each day, and they were paired with an estate. Each day's pay was supposed to be 30-40 cents a day but they were only given 25 cents with food deducted and sometimes weren't paid at all.

The Resistance

It wasn't until the late 1860s that the stereotype of Indian docility was shattered. Indigenous slaves began to openly rebel against the regime. As a result, industrial relations continued to deteriorate, as did working class demonstrations and imperial inquiry. There were a number of labour unrests that reflected "Struggle, Sacrifice, and People's violent outbursts were provoked by a wide range of specific and localised complaints such as the tyrannical behaviour of bosses or wage rate disputes or disagreements over assignments.

In July 1869, a disturbance occurred in Plantation Leonora on the West Coast of Demerara. The shovel gang claimed that their salaries had been withheld since they couldn't finish a task due to flooded dirt. They also sought more compensation for doing the work. Armed police nearly averted a confrontation with the labourers, but the ringleaders were apprehended, convicted, and imprisoned at the Mazaruni penal colony. Violence happened at Plantations Hague, Zeelugt, Vergenoegen, Uitulugt, Success, and Non Pariel the next year.

In 1872, there was another huge upheaval at Plantation Devonshire Castle. Widespread unhappiness with task distribution, prices offered, long hours of work, unilateral pay deductions from labourers, wages, and general ill-treatment and abuse were the fundamental causes of this rebellion. This time, there was a clash with colonial police, who opened fire, killing five labourers and badly injuring others.

Riots and disruptions were common in the 1890s and early 1900s. Fifteen years before the Immigration Act was repealed, five Rose Hall plantation workers were killed in a walkout and riot. To be sure, towards the end of the indentureship system, labour protest had taken on a variety of forms, including work stoppages, mass picketing and violence, marches to the Immigration Department, assaults on managers and overseers, in addition to passive resistance like feigning illness, malingering was quite frequent.

Indentured workers also suffered and made sacrifices in other areas, such as maintaining their religious and cultural customs in the face of a harsh and oppressive environment. Temples and mosques began to appear along the coast in the late 19th century, and their traditional languages, music, dress, food, and culture began to dominate. With linguistic obstacles, they adopted Western education's requirements so that they might advance in society. In the end, they and their descendants became teachers, headmasters, physicians, attorneys, accountants, and government employees, among other professions and occupations.

They worked tirelessly to secure the sugar sector's survival and the rise of the rice business. During their indentureship, they made major contributions to village development, cash crop cultivation, cow raising, milk selling, and other economic activities. Cab drivers, bankers, tailors, carpenters, boat builders, charcoal makers, goldsmiths, porters, small scale

manufacturers, and fishers were among the off-plantation occupations that Indian immigrants worked in starting in the late 1800s.

Their descendants have achieved and continue to make enormous progress in the sectors of social, economic, cultural, education, politics, and labour unions in recent years. Many of them have gone on to become well-known sports figures, businesspeople, educators, physicians, lawyers, accountants, politicians, and trade unionists. In today's Guyanese culture, descendants of immigrants are actively involved in every aspect of life.

This shows that "struggle, sacrifice and resistance" were "essential" to the Indian immigrant mentality from 1838-1917 during the neo-slavery regime. It is primarily because of their tenacity, perseverance, custom, tradition and dedication to family that they and their successors have been able to endure. This always fosters thrift, industry and self-esteem.

Immigration Ordinance Act 1870

The Immigration Ordinance of 1870 empowered the Governor to set restrictions regarding the immigrants' barracks in order to provide adequate sanitation and hygiene. Houses were to be well-drained, with wood floors and white-washed on the inside and exterior. Two rooms were available in the finest barracks (for one family or for three single men). Employers were obligated to provide appropriate homes in good condition for their indentured labourers.

An earthen fireplace was in a living room that was part of a covered veranda for cooking (choolhaa). Rainwater was collected from the rooftops, which had galvanized sheeting covering the roofs. Several of the barracks were in disrepair and were prone to flooding. Latrines were rare. Owners of particular estates were accountable for adhering to the rules, however this was not always done. Unfortunately, government failure to implement its own restrictions became apparent in 1910.

Not only were the surroundings filthy, but there were also societal injustices. Even in 1897, when Alzacar cited Robert Guppy's concerns from 1888:

“There is only one room in which a family can raise their children, if they have any. From one end of the barracks to the other, the open area is filled with sounds, conversations, and odours. There are just a few places to cook, and there are no toilets. As soon as the need arises, the men, women, boys, and girls go together to the canes or bush. Comfort, privacy, and decency are all out of the question in such a scenario.”

How Immigrants Profited the Planters

For starters, the immigrants enhanced the supply of labour on the estates. This, together with the enticement of higher market prices, contributed to an increase in export staples output. By 1859, the estate labour force had grown to 17,000 or 20,000 people.

Despite the fact that land usage had not risen, productivity had grown. Output, which had fallen significantly after Emancipation, had now increased and eventually surpassed levels achieved under slavery. By 1860, the rebound in sugar output could be directly ascribed to the contribution of Indian labour. The sugar industry attracted the Indians to Trinidad and other colonies because of the sugar trade. The Emancipation of African Slaves took place in Trinidad, a late-developed plantation colony that lacked both labour and a population. From 1850 to 1865, Trinidad was home to a number of Indian populations. A similar number of British West Indians lived in North America, as did an equivalent number of Indians. About half of Trinidad's residents were immigrants in 1861, which had a significant influence on the country.

Education would have been available only because there was enough labour supply at the period, and therefore, mostly Indian indentureship offered up work options. Other immigrant groups were gradually leaving agricultural labour. The Portuguese had primarily become urban dwellers, working as retailers or shop clerks. The majority of Chinese were also small traders, many of whom worked in rural regions, with a few being involved in market gardening or provision cultivation. West Indian educated workers made up a sizable part of the professional, clerical, and skilled job categories including the teachers, clergymen, public officers, nurses, and druggists.

Also, the islands would grow increasingly culturally diverse, with a mix of Africans and Europeans as well as Chinese, Indians, and Portuguese. Everyone had their own culture and language, which combined to create our many dialects. Religion, ethnicity, and cultural practices were also mingled. The introduction of rice farming, notably in Trinidad and British Guiana, would have a significant influence.

Positive outcomes outweigh unfavourable ones in all of these cases. On overall, immigration and indentureship helped races live and work together so that all races might be treated equally.

Impact of Indians in Trinidad

When it came to indentured labour, the planters were also involved in establishing specific discourses about the "Indians" and the "Negros." Planter speeches of the time immediately following freedom are full with caricatures of the luxury-loving, indolent, immoral Negro and of the docile, diligent, and clever Indian.

Unfortunately, as with ethnic/racial stereotypes, these negative racial qualities are mistakenly assumed to be natural features of the various groups, while the unique colonial past that led to the formation of such rhetoric is forgotten or ignored. The book's main focus is on historically situating and understanding the history of racial relations between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians, as well as the continuities and discontinuities between colonial and postcolonial times.

However, India occupies a central place in the Indo-Trinidadian imagination. While Indo-Trinidadians maintain their devotion and patriotism to Trinidad and Tobago, they also take pleasure in their Indian origin. They do not consider these two identities to be inherently contradictory.

In the 1930s, as India's independence movement gained momentum, the Indo-Trinidadian awareness grew. Indigenous Trinidadians began organising rallies on the island in support of India's desire for independence in the 1930s. "Vande Matram," the Indian national anthem, began and concluded public gatherings conducted in regions having a predominance of Indo-

Trinidadians. India Club, for example, was one of several Indo-Trinidadian groups founded during this time period to disseminate knowledge about India and things Indian.

During their tour to India, wealthy Indo-Trinidadians generously donated to famine relief funds. The arrival of a slew of Indian missionaries and cultural leaders sparked renewed interest in the language and culture of their "mother country," particularly among the Indo-Trinidadian middle class. In 1935, the first Indian film, "Bala Joban," was screened to rapt crowds in Trinidad. Contact with India continues today, and among Indo-Trinidadians, India as an imagined homeland holds a lot of symbolic value. However, the majority of Indo-Trinidadians will adamantly maintain their Trinidadian identity.

The Indo-Trinidadian issue of being perceived as aliens or outsiders in their adopted community due to their ancestral culture is fairly typical of how immigrant Asians are perceived in general. Because of their particularly large cultural baggage, Asians, as in the United States, are sometimes seen as unassimilable or permanent outsiders by other cultures.

Why Indo-Caribbean Historical Discussion is So Important?

The method taken in the preceding works can considerably assist an examination of Indian indentured experience or history in the Caribbean. After all, indentured Indians were colonised as well, and they were not included in the creation of their own history. However, the subaltern method, which was created and developed in India and later expanded to other regions of the Developing World, was rarely used to Indian indentured history for some reason. The records of the colonisers were utilised to write the history of indentured Indians whenever it was employed. It's uncommon to find a history written from the perspective of "below."

So, the subaltern always loses and imperialists always triumph. One can argue that the majority of colonized and post-colonial histories were fundamentally skewed, and that any arguments against this narrative in the contemporary time are counter-productive as well, the imperialist approach to writing about Indian indentured labour has slowed a bit. Devi Hardeen's *Brown Atlantic*, which situates Caribbean Indian Indentured Experience within Atlantic Studies, appears to be the only new tendency in indentureship history.

Some recent published books about Indian indentured experiences have extensively and lavishly exploited the Indian C term "Coolie." Furthermore, a review of the literature on Caribbean Indian indentureship in the twenty-first century indicates a duplication and maintenance of the status quo, meaning the same historical works of a few major academics in the subject.

When it comes to studying the past, archival documents are essential, especially in its provenance form - that is, the original records as they were generated - and may be quite helpful when producing a narrative, recollection, or history of any group of people or place. If thoroughly examined, these data can authenticate or even offer a foundation for conflicting historical interpretations. Most of these people's history has been written by colonists' supporters or by those who have utilised colonizers' documents to write the history of the subjugated. ¹⁰ It reflects imperial dominance and exploitation, as well as a poor portrayal of the colonised, resulting in a dismal history of the colonized with isolated moments of positive. In the end, however, this strategy has resulted in a lack of a communal memory among the community. A study of the historiography of indentured Indians exposes these regrettable patterns.

However, it appears that two publications have dominated the sector. Without these texts, it is virtually difficult to write about indenture. As a result of the trade-in indentured labour in Trinidad and British Guiana between 1875 and 1917, Hugh Tinker's *A New System of Slavery* and Keith Laurence's *A Question of Labour* was published.

Laurence's book looks at the migration and settlement of Indians in the Caribbean from their country. Laurence demonstrates how indenture was arranged through a three-way interaction between the British, Indian, and Caribbean governments and plantation owners.

Laurence seldom employs oral materials in his study of Indian indentureship, which is a shame because he began his research in the 1960s when there were still some ex-indentured employers in British Guiana and Trinidad. Laurence's work would have offered a more complete picture of the Indian experience with indenture in the Caribbean if he had included oral histories from indenture survivors.

On the other hand, when indentured Indians were imported from India to the Caribbean to replace slaves, Tinker relates the tale of how they were subjected to identical conditions as former African slaves. It is his contention that the indentured Indians traded one oppressive and impoverished environment for another. Indians were mistreated on Caribbean sugar plantations throughout the indenture period, according to Tinker. Why would an estimated 30,000 ex-indentured Indians return to work on the sugar estates for a second, third, or even fourth time if the system constituted a fresh kind of slavery, Tinker did not answer. Why have the majority of indentured Indians chosen to remain in the Caribbean rather than return home? Of course, in place of return voyages, the planters enticed Indians with tiny plots of land. Indians did, however, send money back to India, and Indian settlers in the Caribbean did, among other things, buy land.

Both, Tinker and Laurence used and relied on archival records of colonialists, Christian missionaries, and the occasional European individual traveller/writer to write the history of Indian indenture from both sides of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The archival documents were created by individuals from their own views, reflecting anecdotal rather than analytical evidence, which is a flaw in this method. To write about Indian indentures, these people relied on authority rather than evidence.

The papers or writings for the indentured, Labour History 391 is a study of indenture from the perspective of a society of outsiders to indenture. Because of this, Tinker and Laurence may have accentuated the naiveté of the original record makers. Also, both writers may have continued a range of omissions and commissions mistakes.

Nonetheless, several archives in the Caribbean and former colonial mother nations of the Caribbean today hold the original correspondence between the imperial and colonial administrations on indenture. They have a prominent place in the hierarchy of Indian indentured history, as shown by their frequent use by current academics to examine indentured servitude.

Indian indenture faced issues even when independent-minded scholars applied empirical methods to acquire evidence and make conclusions. There's Becchu "Bound Coolie":

Radicalism in British Guiana from 1894-1901 by Clem Seecharan and Mahabir's *The Still Cry: Personal Accounts of East Indians in Trinidad and Tobago* by Mahabir, for example. There were 15 people that wrote on indenture from the perspective of indentured Indians over the period 1845-1917.

Indenture organisers, on the other hand, drew these testimonies from historical archives that were mostly controlled by them. "East Indian protest songs in British Guiana," by Prakash Vatuk, 16 is based on unfiltered Indian sources. A decade (1955) after the final cargo of Indians departed British Guiana for India, the author performed field study in British Guiana in the 1960s and 1970s. More than 900 protest songs were recorded by him from descendants of indentured workers, but sadly, just a few of these songs are available today.

The discussion, debate, and discourse on Indian indenture has changed from Eurocentric to Indocentric without a middle ground since the early 1970s, notably after the inaugural conference on East Indians in the Caribbean in 1975. Indian intellectuals, mostly males, aspired for a dramatic, not a gradual, increase in knowledge of Indian indenture from the viewpoints of both indentured servants and indentured servants' descendants.

They thought it was the best spot in the Caribbean to start studying indenture. From a subaltern perspective, this is fundamentally a revisionist approach. Instead of discovering helpful knowledge to examine and rebuild the story and memory of indenture, this method has produced a gospel of us against them in the understanding of indenture.

The Caribbean Indians themselves have, of course, published several well-researched dissertations on indenture. Maurtis Hassankhan, Brinsley Samaroo, Tota Mangar, Clem Seecharan, Rosemarijn Hoefte, and Clem Seecharan at the University of the West Indies are prominent instances. Incomplete, incorrect and unorthodox assessments, some of which were self-published, counteract some of these findings. It's also worth noting that recent indenture readings indicate an island- or country-centric perspective, as well as the ambition of these indentured writers to master their particular location's historical knowledge. The capacity to reach objectivity is stymied and suffocated by this historical particularity.

Except for a handful 392 L. Roopnarine comparative historical studies of indentured service in the Caribbean, comparative historical studies of indentured service in the Caribbean are rare. However, “comparative historical analysis is best viewed as part of a long-term intellectual effort aimed at explaining substantively significant outcomes.”

As a result, the larger issues surrounding indenture in the nations that have tried with it are not well recognized. The Caribbean area is restricted by insularity and language obstacles imposed by colonial European powers, which explains the discrepancy and absence of a comparative approach in the examination of indentureship among different Caribbean countries. Patterns of ethnic rivalry and polarization, separation tendencies, and hegemonic cultural claims have been replicated and perpetuated in modern Caribbean discourse from the colonial period. In the Caribbean, Indian indentured historiography has generated two opposing discourses with no middle ground, both reflecting a history of colonialism, one here and the other there. The first has followed a neo-slave scholarship or victimology school, in which Indians were regarded indentured like Black slaves, with little or no option to dispute the institutionalization of their indenture contract.

Even when indentured Indians rose out against the indignities of indenture, the more powerful plantation system repressed them. Indentured Indians were merely victims of their overlords' indenture, which they consented to, and they served them in the hopes of becoming marginal beneficiaries via forced work and savings, land acceptance and settlement, or eventual repatriation to their country. Simply said, Indians in the Caribbean were considered a servant class and were treated as such.

Secondly, indenture has been examined from the standpoint of the labourers, or from a nonlife perspective, with a focus on peasant revolt and struggle against plantation authority and control. But even though the Indians were tortured by their rulers, they also employed a variety of resistance methods to improve their circumstances, the main argument goes, to deal with indenture's pangs, speak out to indenture's oppressors, watch out for their indentured brethren and sisters, and plan a better life outside of indenture's limits and circular cycles.

Indian indentured history has been plagued by difficulties that have led to two distinct types of patterns. As a result, indentured servitude has been relegated to the backwaters of Caribbean historiography. A doctoral student named Devi Hardeen claims that there has been substantial research on the Black/White/Atlantic but virtually nothing on the Brown/Indian/Atlantic.

While some published works, such as those by Brinsley Samaroo, Bridget Brereton, and Clem Seecharan, have looked into the Brown Atlantic, the focus has mostly been on the micro-local level. The role of indenture in the Caribbean at a macro level is little understood. Indentured Caribbean studies, according to Hardeen, there appears to be no dominating figure like C.R. L. James, Paul Gilroy, or Walter Rodney, to mention a few.

Therefore, it is necessary to discuss Indo-Caribbean historiography from indentureship point of view and see the real face of history.

Chapter 7: Windrush

India's Indentureship Scheme came to an end because of Indian middle-class politics. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi led huge rallies in Natal, South Africa in the late 1800's against the discrimination of free, professional Indians.

Eventually, indentured Indian workers joined the revolt. In India, this was taken up by Indian nationalists, and it expanded to Fiji and Mauritius in the following years. It was decided on March 12th, 1917 that recruiting of Indians to labour in overseas colonies would be put on hold owing to military necessities of the First World War, and it was never restarted after the war. On January 1, 1920, the British Imperial Government and the Government of India gave in to the demand to abolish indentureship.

Plantation servitude did not cease with the termination of indenture. Private ownership of sugar estates in British Guiana, for example, was supplanted around the turn of the century by the corporation Bookers, which wielded immense power over the country's economic and political fortunes. Guyanese referred to British Guiana as "Booker's Guiana," and Moses Nagamootoo chronicles the attempts of Indian-Guyanese in the 1940s and 1950s to survive outside of the plantation and out of the shadow of "the colonial vampire" in his novel *Hendree's Cure*.

How Indians Fought for Their Liberation from Indentureship?

In 1894, Bechu, a Bengali man, was enslaved to Guyana. By writing letters to colonial newspapers about a number of injustices perpetrated against indentured Indians on the plantations, Bechu was able to disrupt the plantocratic narrative of indenture as a benevolent intervention into the lives of Indian migrants, disrupting the plantocratic narrative of indenture as a benevolent intervention into the lives of Indian migrants.

The 1898 Royal Commission of Enquiry is a significant historical source that recounts Bechu's time in the colony and the unrest he caused.

Bechu wrote a statement for this commission and was summoned to testify as a result. Reading this text, one is reminded of Bechu's speech via the colonial lens, which both questions and co-opts his voice. Thus, his most powerful message, which followed a recent uprising in which police opened fire on migrants—the Indians were terrified into acquiescing to

plantocracy insistence on lower wages—is muted by a series of questions about Bechu's life in India, which appear to undermine the only indentured Indian voice present at the proceedings.

While archive research and academics like as Prabhu Mohapatra who have performed vital work on mostly forgotten writings penned by indentured labourers are important, they should not be ignored (Mohapatra). An indentured labourer's 1916 poetry collection was translated and reissued lately, making it available to an even broader audience as one of the first examples of Indian creative expression on the Guyana indenture system (Sharma).

Despite the fact that the colonial enterprise had little interest in preserving the voices and inner lives of indentured workers and their descendants, study continues to uncover obscure and 'undiscovered' writings. If this is true for the bulk of Indians who migrated to the Caribbean, then the silences of the past are even more relevant for those who were minority in the system, especially South Indians recruited from the erstwhile Madras Presidency, and Muslims recruited from the North. But the ones who spoke, as mentioned earlier, are the ones the influences of the end of indentureship along with many political and economic factors.

HMT Empire Windrush

A passenger liner and cruise ship, HMT Empire Windrush (formerly MV Monte Rosa) was built and commissioned in Germany in 1930. In the 1930s, she was owned and operated by Hamburg Süd under the name Monte Rosa. During World War II, she served as a troopship for the German navy.

A passenger ship built by Blohm & Voss in Hamburg between 1924 and 1931 for Hamburg Süd, Empire Windrush was the last of the Monte-class passenger ships (Hamburg South American Steam Shipping Company). Hamburg Süd felt that transporting German emigrants to South America would be profitable in the 1920s (see German Argentine). Both the Monte Sarmiento and the Monte Olivia were designed with 1,150 cabins and 1,350 bunk beds for single-class passengers, respectively. Immigrant commerce turned out to be lower than projected, and the two ships were converted to cruise ships.

The British government took her as a trophy of war and christened her to the Empire Windrush. They were able to utilize her until March 1954, when she caught fire and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea, killing four crew members. As for HMT and MV, they stand for "His Majesty's Transport" and "Motor Vessel", respectively."

From Jamaica to London, the Empire Windrush carried 1,027 passengers and two stowaways on a journey that began in 1948. Of the 802 passengers, 693 wanted to settle in the United Kingdom. It is frequently referred to as the Windrush generation, a group of British Caribbean immigrants to Great Britain following World War II, including those who came on later ships.

It was 1948 when the Empire Windrush arrived in Kingston, Jamaica, to take up troops on leave who were on route from Australia to Britain. Some Caribbean migrants opted to leave "before of time" when the British Nationality Act of 1948 was being debated in parliament. Prior to 1962, there was no immigration control for CUKCs in the UK, and they could stay permanently.

Because the ship was far from full, opportunistic advertising in a Jamaican newspaper was published offering inexpensive transportation aboard the ship for anyone who wished to come and work in the UK. Many former troops used this chance to return to Britain in the hopes of obtaining better work, even rejoining the RAF in certain circumstances; others opted to go merely to experience what the "mother country" was like. One passenger subsequently reported that the demand for tickets considerably outweighed the availability, and there was a long line to get one.

The ship also carried 66 persons whose last county of residence was Mexico - they were a group of Polish people who had come from Siberia via India and the Pacific and had been granted permission to settle in the UK under the conditions of the Polish Resettlement Act 1947. They were part of a group of Poles who had been residing in Mexico since 1943, and the Empire Windrush had stopped at Tampico, Mexico to pick them up.

Many people believe that the Empire Windrush carried 492, which is based on newspaper accounts at the time, which said that "more than 400", 430", or 500 Jamaican men had landed in Britain. As a result, according to the ship's records, which are maintained at the United

Kingdom's National Archives, 802 passengers listed a Caribbean nation as their last address. 119 of the passengers were British, while 40 were from other countries.

Sam Beaver King, a former RAF pilot, was one of the passengers. Notting Hill Carnival and Southwark's first black mayor were among his accomplishments. Lord Kitchener, Lord Beginner, Lord Woodbine, and Mona Baptiste were all calypso artists. John Henry Clavell Smythe, a serving RAF officer, was on the ship as a welfare officer. He would go on to become Sierra Leone's Attorney General. Nancy Cunard, the heiress to the Cunard shipping empire, was also on board. She was returning to the United States from Trinidad. In the stowaway group was Evelyn Wauchope, 39 years old. A seven-day drive from Kingston led to her discovery. On board the ship, a whip-round was held to raise £50 – enough for the trip plus £4 for her pocket money. He had a crush on Nancy Cunard, who "planned to take care of her.

Transporting service people had been the goal of Windrush's journey. The British government did not anticipate and did not welcome the extra influx of West Indian immigrants. Mr. Isaacs said in Parliament that others would not be encouraged to follow in their footsteps.

Mr. Creech Jones, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, signed a Cabinet note three days prior to arrival stating that the Jamaican Government could not legally prohibit individuals from going and the British government could not legally prevent them from entering. But he said that the government was opposed to this immigration and that the Colonial Office and the Jamaican government would do everything they could to discourage it. But despite all of this, the first immigration law was not approved until 1962.

Empire Windrush's landing was a major news story. The Evening Standard despatched an aeroplane to photograph the ship from the air even while it was in the English Channel, and the story was printed on the top page of the newspaper. The ship arrived in Tilbury, near London, on June 21, and the 1,027 passengers began disembarking the next day. Newspaper writers and Pathé News film cameras covered the event. As a result, the term "Windrush" has come to stand for "West Indian migration" and, by extension, "the birth of contemporary British multiracial society."

Those who had not yet found housing were temporarily accommodated in the Clapham South deep shelter in South-west London, which is less than a mile from the Coldharbour Lane Employment Exchange in Brixton, where some of the newcomers were looking for employment. The stowaways were given short prison terms and were allowed to stay in the UK after their release. Many of Empire Windrush's passengers only expected to stay for a few years, but while some did return, the bulk chose to stay for good. The "Windrush Generation" refers to those born in the West Indies who immigrated to the United Kingdom during this period of mass migration.

Between 1948 and 1970, over 500,000 individuals left the West Indies to reside in the United Kingdom. The West Indies are a group of more than 20 Caribbean islands, including Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad. These individuals shaped contemporary Britain. They were all British citizens, and despite the fact that they had never lived in the country before, they had the right to enter, work, and reside here if they so desired.

They arrived to the UK for a variety of causes, including emigration and immigration. A number of people were looking to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families. Some people come to work for a time, accumulate money, and then return to their native country to continue their lives. Britain was short of employees to manage the transportation system, postal service and hospitals. Other West Indians were veterans of the Second World War i.e., 1939-1945.

Role of the Caribbean Immigrants (Windrush Generation) in Rebuilding Britain

Britain, with its new reforming Labour administration, was short of workers when the Empire Windrush landed at Tilbury from the Caribbean on June 22, 1948. In order to restore a war-damaged economy, both men and women were needed. This was especially true in areas that were vital to the rebuilding program. Iron, steel, coal and food production are among them.

In addition, there was a significant backlog of critical maintenance and repair work, as well as acute shortages in the building industry. Both men and women were needed in the service

sector to operate public transportation and staff the nascent National Health Service (NHS). Many of the Windrush passengers left the Caribbean in search of work because of this potential.

A few newspaper headlines welcomed the Windrush passengers. However, the government was concerned about a visibly different population, but was relieved by the presumption of transitory tourists rather than permanent residents.

This premise was disproved by economic necessity. The overall working population had decreased by 1.38 million between mid- 1945 and the end of 1946, exacerbating labour shortages as many married women and elderly persons who had postponed retirement quit the positions they had filled during the war.

A large number of people were also fleeing the nation. Many families emigrated to parts of the 'Old' Commonwealth (including Australia, New Zealand, and Canada) in the late 1940s and early 1950s, countries that were short on labour and eager to encourage white settlers from the United Kingdom in order to maintain their old colonial ties and European notions of citizenship and identity. Instead of relying on white British workers from these areas to fill positions, the government began paying attention to inhabitants of the 'New' Commonwealth countries, notably those living in the Caribbean, in the early post-war years.

It took a long time for colonial inhabitants to leave their homelands. As many as 2,000 individuals a year entered Britain from 1948 to 1952, when the Empire Windrush came, followed by a continuous and fast increase until 1957. By 1960, the number had risen to 58,000, and by 1961 it had more than doubled, in anticipation of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which would restrict entrance. Approximately 161,000 individuals born in the Caribbean lived in England and Wales in 1961, according to the national population census: 90,000 males and slightly over 71,000 women.

For men, manufacturing and construction, as well as public transportation, were the most prevalent industries in which individuals from the Caribbean obtained work. In the UK, many Caribbean women found work as nurses and nursing assistants in the NHS, as well as in

public transportation and manufacturing, particularly in the burgeoning white goods industries in cities.

Why Labourers Migrated from the Caribbean to Britain?

Many young people departed the Caribbean for a variety of reasons, including employment openings in the UK and a desire for a different lifestyle. For others, leaving was a means of escaping tyranny at work or at home, while others found the decision to leave more difficult than they had anticipated, as it meant leaving behind family and friends.

While some had served or worked for the UK during the war, many of these men and women left the Caribbean on their own rather than being recruited. They felt like they were "coming home" and joining an imperial family they believed they belonged to. It was a country that was still defined by structural inequities and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours notwithstanding the advances and improvements in living situations. The potential recruits were referred to as "coloured colonial labour" in official documents, despite the fact that they were British subjects.

Workability of African Caribbean in-migrants was cited as a problem in the Working Party on Coloured People Seeking Employment report of 1953, for example, because of their "poor productivity, high turnover rate, irresponsibility, quarrelsomeness and lack of discipline".

During the immediate post-war era and for decades beyond, these early post-war workers made a major contribution to the British economy and economic prosperity. Employees from Caribbean countries were sought by businesses in important industries, rather than waiting for workers to come to the UK as the need for skilled and unskilled labour grew throughout the 1950s. More than 3,500 Barbadians were brought to the UK by London Transport, which paid their fares to the UK and then recovered them by deductions from their earnings. This practice, which connected economic migrants to specific jobs, persisted throughout the years.

In the 1950s, over half of all males from the Caribbean who migrated to the UK had worked in skilled jobs or had outstanding employment credentials. As a result of the restrictions placed on them, many of them were forced to choose occupations that the local populace deemed

unpleasant, such as street sweeping and general labour, or positions that required unsociable hours, such as night shifts. In the beginning, more than half of the men from the Caribbean took employment with a lesser status than they were qualified for because of their abilities and experience.

"Willing black hands" operated tube trains, collected bus fares, and emptied hospital patients' bed-pans according to Peter Fryer in the 1950s. In terms of willingness, however, and how were these newly hired workers treated? Discriminatory views sometimes hindered their possibilities for promotion and access to better-paying professions with higher responsibilities and prospects.

The British Hotels and Restaurants Association recruited in Barbados, and the NHS dispatched managers to the Caribbean to recruit already-trained nurses and young women interested in pursuing nursing careers in the United Kingdom.

Hospital matrons and British politicians also visited the Caribbean, and by 1955, 16 British colonies had established selection and recruiting bureaus to assure a steady supply of applicants for nursing training in the United Kingdom. It was clear that the NHS could not satisfy the population's health demands without enlisting the help of foreign-born women and men.

Brie and Georgiana, who left the Caribbean in the early 1950s to train as nurses in the United Kingdom, informed me that they faced a variety of discriminatory attitudes and behaviour during their training, and that they were often limited to the most menial tasks:

'We were instructed to clean lockers and mattresses, and we were forced to clean wheelchairs and commodes...we performed a lot of menial chores,' says one of the survivors.

Oral histories with women who came to the UK to nurse indicate evidence of harassment, bullying, and discrimination on the wards, as well as their being directed onto a less prestigious

training track. However, these accounts demonstrate the deep pride women took in their job, as well as their contributions to the NHS and the overall health of the British people.

Men's abilities were frequently unrecognized, however in later years, some people who worked in construction or manufacturing moved on to other sorts of labour. Clinton Edwards, who served in the Royal Air Force throughout the war, returned to England on the Empire Windrush. He got a job as a welder, but instead of welding, he was handed a shovel and a wheel barrow and ordered to clean up. After eight years in the RAF, he rejoined British Oxygen as a lab technician weld metals, a job he disliked. 'My life in England has been excellent, and I like my work and my coworkers and they treat me well,' he told the journalist. Their children and grandkids resided in the United Kingdom, as Brie, Georgiana, and Clinton described.

Hundreds of thousands of their countrymen, including Clinton, Brie, and Georgiana, have not only built a living here over the last seven decades but have also made a significant contribution to British economic prosperity and a significant shift in British culture and social views.

The Fate of Empire Windrush

In February 1954, Empire Windrush set off from Yokohama, Japan, for her final trip. She sailed from Kure to the United Kingdom, stopping in Hong Kong, Singapore, Colombo, Aden, and Port Said on her way back to the United States. Ses passengers included injured United Nations veterans of the Korean War and troops from the Duke of Wellington's Regiment who had been wounded at the Third Battle of the Hook in May 1953, as well as a number of other passengers. As a result of engine failures and other problems, the ship caught fire shortly after departing Hong Kong. The journey to Port Said took ten weeks. A group of 50 Royal Marines from the 3 Commando Brigade boarded the ship, and it sailed out for the last time. There were 222 crew members and 1,276 passengers on board, including military personnel as well as several women and children who were dependents of military people. The ship was almost entirely filled with 1498 passengers on board, despite the fact that it was rated to transport 1541.

There was an explosion and fire in the engine room around 6:15 am on Sunday, March 28. The third engineer, two other members of the engine-room crew and the first electrician perished in the blast, while a fifth crew member in the engine room and one in the boiler room escaped. There was no electricity on board since the four primary generators were in the blazing engine room; the backup generator was activated, but the main circuit breaker malfunctioned, rendering it useless.

The ship lacked a sprinkler system. When the chief officer heard the explosion from the bridge, he gathered the ship's firefighting team, which was on deck at the time conducting normal operations. They were only able to fight the fire for a few minutes before the water pumps that supplied their fire hoses stopped working due to a power outage. The second engineer was able to enter the engine room while wearing a smoke hood, but was unable to lock a watertight door that may have kept the fire at bay. Attempts to seal all watertight doors using the bridge controls had also failed.

On June 23, at 6:23 a.m., the first distress calls were sent out using the emergency radio transmitter since electricity had been cut off. Although the ship's public address system, air whistles, and steam whistles did not operate, an order was made to rouse the passengers and staff and have them report to their emergency stations. The lifeboats were launched around 6:45 in the morning after all firefighting efforts were ceased.

The order was made to drop the remaining boats into the water as the fire advanced fast. Only 12 lifeboats were deployed in the end. Many of the ship's crew and men jumped into the water after descending down ladders or ropes. Some were rescued by Windrush's lifeboats, while others were rescued by a boat from the first rescue ship, which arrived at 7 a.m. At 7:30 a.m., the chief officer was the last person to depart Windrush. Despite the fact that some passengers were in the water for two hours, everyone was recovered, and the only deaths were four crew members who died in the engine room.

The Dutch ship MV Mentor, the British P&O Cargo liner MV Socotra, the Norwegian ship SS Hemsefjell, and the Italian ships SS Taigete and SS Hellschell responded to Windrush's distress call. An Avro Shackleton from 224 Squadron of the Royal Air Force participated in the

rescue mission. French Red Cross and French Armed Forces took care of the passengers and crew at Algiers. On the aircraft carrier HMS Triumph, they were transported to Gibraltar, and then returned to the United Kingdom via air.

Empire Windrush was finally rescued 26 hours after it had been abandoned by HMS Saintes, part of the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet, 100km northwest of Algiers. An entire crew from Saintes managed to come on board and connect a tow rope after the fire had burned for more than a day. On Monday, March 29, 1954, Saintes began towing Empire Windrush to Gibraltar at a pace of about 3.5 knots (6.5 km/h). However, Empire Windrush sunk in the early morning hours of Tuesday, March 30, 1954, after having been pulled a distance of just around 16 kilometres (8.6 nmi). At a depth of around 2,600 meters, the wreck is located.

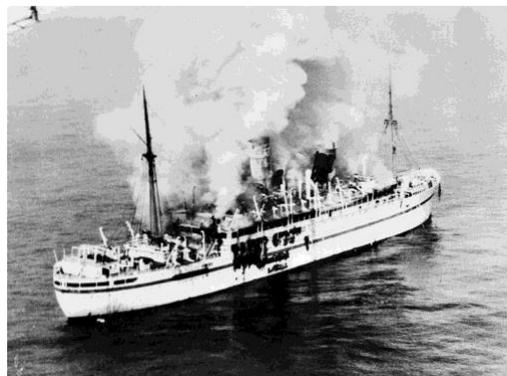


Figure 5 Empire Windrush on fire, March, 1954. Source: (Wikipedia, n.d.)

During the week of 21 June to 7 July 1954, the sinking of the Empire Windrush was investigated in London. As yet, there has been no official explanation for why the fire broke out, but it is believed that corrosion in one of the ship's funnels (or uptakes) may have resulted in a panel failing, allowing incandescently hot soot to fall into the engine room, where it damaged an oil supply pipe and ignited leaking oil.

Another possibility is that a gasoline pipe cracked and spilled fuel oil over a hot exhaust pipe, causing it to catch fire. Due to the fact that it was a government-owned vessel, it was not insured.

Windrush Celebration

Annual events commemorate the arrival of the Windrush and the succeeding surge of immigration from Caribbean nations. On the 22nd of June, Windrush Day is honoured for the first time, with the inaugural commemoration taking place in 2018. Exhibitions, religious services, and cultural activities are held in the run-up to the celebration.



Figure 6: the opening Ceremony of London Olympic Games 2012, recreation of Empire Windrush. Source: (BBC, n.d.)

The MV Empire Windrush was featured in the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics, and the National Theatre presented Andrea Levy's *Small Island*, a narrative about first-generation Jamaican immigrants, in 2019. The BBC will air a feature-length drama inspired on the Windrush affair in June 2020. With that being mentioned, let's discuss what Windrush Scandal was and how it impacted the Britain.

Windrush Scandal

The Windrush generation landed in the United Kingdom lawfully. Commonwealth nationals and their offspring enjoyed an automatic right to reside and work in the UK until 1973, when a new immigration legislation came into effect. Many of them did so without requiring any further paperwork. However, in late 2017, a number of incidents were revealed in which people who came to the UK from Commonwealth nations before 1973, and occasionally their descendants, were having difficulty proving their citizenship status under strict new immigration regulations dubbed the "hostile environment" policy.

There are a lot of people who don't have the necessary documents because they've never had to. They were denied medical care, denied housing and deported or threatened with deportation, according to those who spoke forward. Prime Minister Theresa May apologized in April 2018 for her government's handling of certain Caribbean immigrants and maintained that they were still welcome. After a year, Sajid Javid, the then-Home Secretary, launched a compensation scheme for those who had been unfairly imprisoned or deported from the United Kingdom.

After just a tiny percentage of applicants got compensation, the scheme was heavily criticized. The deadline for submissions was extended by two years in February 2020.

Who Revealed Windrush Scandal?

Caroline Nokes, the UK's immigration minister, disclosed that the Home Office had booked 991 tickets on commercial aircraft in the 12 months previous to March 2018 to send persons to the Caribbean who were suspected of being in the country unlawfully.

Deportations may not have totalled 991 because some may not have taken place, while others may include several tickets for one person's trip. How many of the tickets booked were utilized for deportations was not specified in the statistics. On the two years from 2015 to 2017, Nokes claimed, the government spent £52 million on all deportation flights, including £17.7 million for chartered planes. For the 12 months preceding to March 2018, there was no information on the costs incurred. According to Javid's November 2018 monthly briefing to the Home Affairs Select Committee, 83 examples of persons being wrongly deported had already

been proven, and authorities suspected that there may be another 81. At least 11 deportees perished in the following months.

As a result of public outrage, deportations were halted in 2018. Deportations, however, are expected to start in February 2019, according to the UK's Home Office. In response to the announcement, the Home Office was once again criticized. An audit by the UK's National Audit Office in December 2018 determined that the UK's Home Office had "failed to safeguard the rights of Windrush crisis victims to live, work, and access services," and that the problem had not been effectively addressed despite warnings four years ago.

On 5 February 2019, Javid claimed that all of the deportees had committed "very serious crimes... like rape and murder, firearms offences, and drug-trafficking," but the claim was rebutted by the Home Office, and commentators criticized it as inaccurate and potentially harmful to the deportees' futures. Deportations to Jamaica should be halted until the Home Office publishes its inquiry into the Windrush crisis, the Jamaican High Commissioner to the UK said on February 21, 2019.

Many Windrush victims were still homeless on May 21, 2018, according to reports, sleeping on the streets or on the sofas of friends and family while waiting for Home Office action. Many people couldn't afford to travel to Home Office appointments even if they were offered them. "Yet another failure in a series of terrible failures that Windrush residents are being left homeless and starving on the streets," David Lammy MP said. MPs called for the creation of a hardship fund to cover immediate needs in late May and early June.

For those affected by the scandal, Sajid Javid, the new Home Secretary, announced on May 24 a number of initiatives to expedite their citizenship applications. A free citizenship application was made available to Windrush generation children who arrived before they turned 18 and to children born in the UK to Windrush parents. The right to remain was also made available to those who were eligible but were living outside the UK, subject to normal character requirements.

MPs criticised the proposals because they gave no possibility of appeal or review of decisions. The head of the Commons Home Affairs Committee, Yvette Cooper, stated: "Given the history of this, how can anyone believe that the Home Office will not make any more mistakes? If the Home Secretary believes that senior caseworkers will make sound choices in Windrush cases, he has nothing to worry about in terms of appeals and reviews." Javid also stated that a team from the Home Office has identified 500 possible instances so far. In the weeks afterwards, Javid has also pledged to give data on how many individuals have been wrongfully imprisoned and has stated that he does not believe in quantifiable objectives for removals.

By late June, it had been reported that the government's two-week deadline for settling cases had been routinely missed, with many of the most critical cases remaining unresolved. "There has been an effort to address the problem now that it has become so open and public," Jamaican High Commissioner Seth George Ramocan remarked. A compensation scheme had still not been established as of August 2018.

A guy who was remained homeless while waiting for a decision was highlighted, as was Sharon, a former NHS nurse who informed a caseworker, "I am not permitted to work and receive no benefits. I have a 12-year-old child." "Well, I'm afraid these are the immigration laws," the caseworker answered, "but clearly the Home Office point of view [is] that if you don't have a legal status in the UK, you're not eligible to work or study." "It's appalling that the Home Office effectively told Sharon to go and beg for food," said Satbir Singh of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, "when there are laws requiring the state to act in the best interests of children, and provide financial support to children facing destitution." In August 2018, a caseworker for David Lammy stated, "We have referred a total of 25 people to the Windrush taskforce."

Most Windrush immigrants arrived in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, and their only official records were the landing cards they obtained as they landed from ships at UK ports. As time passed, British immigration officers utilized these cards to verify dates of arrival in questionable immigration cases, and they became increasingly common. All of those landing cards were slated to be destroyed back in 2009, as part of a larger effort to eliminate paper records.

However, the decision to demolish was made by the then-Labour administration and enforced by the new coalition government in 2010.

It took the UK government 24 years to find 24 individuals who were wrongfully deported, while 14 people who were wrongfully deported to the Caribbean have yet to be found. Unofficially deported persons to non-Caribbean Commonwealth nations were not traced by officials. 35 persons have received "urgent and extraordinary help" payments totalling £46,795 up to that point. Neun victims had passed away by October 2020, and many more had yet to get recompense.

Reaction of the Caribbean on Windrush Scandal

Prime Minister Gaston Browne of Antigua and Barbuda told Sky News's All Out Politics that a British government apology for the Windrush problem "would be acceptable." He admitted that it was a big issue, but said he was relieved that the government had intervened. "We've had at least one Antiguan with a British passport who was reportedly targeted for deportation because he didn't have the original paperwork." He arrived in the United States with his parents when he was around 59 years old, and he would have been on his parents' passport. Many of these people have no ties to their origin country, have spent their entire lives in the UK, and have worked tirelessly for the country's progress.

On April 18, Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness stated, "My interest is to guarantee that the Windrush generation and the children of the Windrush generation receive justice." We must call it out for what it is, but we must also guarantee that people who have been deported have access to a procedure that will allow them to return home. They should be able to make use of all of the privileges that their citizenship entitles them to. If a mistake has been committed, a restitution process should be initiated.

"Windrush Kids" who attended British schools and paid taxes are "being regarded as illegal immigrants" and "being shut out of the system," with some being deported or transferred to detention centres, according to the Rev. Guy Hewitt, Barbados' high commissioner. She

cautioned individuals against approaching the Home Office without first notifying their representation or lawyer since too many people had been arrested for doing so. It's time to break away from an oppressive and racist colonial history," Hewitt stated in interviews in March 2021.

On the Windrush problem in 2014, Saint Kitts and Nevis' High Commissioner Kevin Isaac enabled Caribbean high commissioners to speak with one voice.

Keith Mitchell, Grenada's Prime Minister, said those impacted deserved "substantial recompense."

That's how a modern age scandal brought all the horrific memories of slavery and indenture back, by seeing this tragedy and responses of the government officials, it will not be wrong to say that Britain is not an imperialism free country yet, the race, the colour, the discrimination still exists and immigrants of the Caribbean do not trust their government like other citizens. And, they have openly confessed this thing on several platforms. Let us share with you some of the stories of immigrants to see a broader picture of the whole scenario.

Chapter 8: Stories from Today

Who is willing to hear the untold stories? We, humans, are bound by our own circumstances, grieves, sorrows, and dilemmas. For us, our misery is the bigger trial, something so

unbearable, so tormenting and heart-wrenching, whereas, if it happens with others, we claim it's what the universe wanted. Ahh, beautiful human beings, aren't we?

Here are some of the untold stories of Caribbean immigrants you'd like to read!

Bibee Zuhoorun

Bibee Zuhoorun was one of 13 lakh Indian labourers hired on sugar plantations in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean after slavery was abolished in the British Empire. In the 1830s, she moved to Mauritius and returned to India, where she testified before an official investigation commission set up to look into breaches in the Indian indenture trade. Zuhoorun's testimony, as the first female indentured labourer, provides a unique perspective on early migration, presenting a picture of deceit, ill-treatment, and injustice.

A labour recruiter in Calcutta convinced her to come to Mauritius and work as a servant. She realised she had been duped after she left: "I didn't get any clothes, blankets, or brass pots provided to me." She also did not receive the promised six-month salary advance or the promised wage quality. She spoke up about the injustices meted out to fellow workers in Mauritius, telling a narrative of overworked men being subjected to ill-treatment and physical punishment. Plantation workers were frequently imprisoned and denied salaries if they refused to work.

To a large extent, Zuhoorun's statement reflected the sexism of the era Sugar was grown and processed by males, while women worked in the homes of plantation owners. For example, Zuhoorun stated that he had "made salt, scaled tamarind trees to harvest them, swept the home, and as a result of her desire to interact with her "master", she to get back to her hometown she had to travel across a foreign land, and she pleaded with everyone to get out of the country and not tell any of their friends to go there.

As part of her testimony, she described instances of sexual harassment and the expectation of sexual favours - all of which are prevalent in plant Plantation owner Dr Boileau invited Zuhoorun to be his mistress and Zuhoorun was upset When asked why, she replied, "I've already humiliated myself by coming on a ship; I don't want to Three months in a correctional

facility and then back at Boileau's residence were the results of her attempts to report the abuse and she was battered and tormented more. When her five-year contract expired, she opted to return to India, even if it meant not receiving any compensation for her 2.5 years of work.

It's clear from Zuhoorun's testimony that she's resentful about the indenture "I would never go back to Mauritius; it's a slave nation, and I'd rather beg for food here," she said. As a result of her overseas move, she had also suffered a lot in an effort to avoid social ostracization, she begged: "Even my mother won't take water from my hand, or dine with me." This was an indication of social exclusion related to the taboo on crossing the Indian Ocean.

Zuhoorun's tale is one of strength and tenacity, as well as sorrow, injustice, and violence. She not only refused Boileau's advances and terminated her contract early, but she also complained to his wife, therefore jeopardizing her livelihood. Her testimony is the oldest record of a female indentured migrant, marked by its power, detail, and ardent condemnation of the indenture system, despite being relegated to history's footnotes.

REPORT

OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED

BY

The Supreme Government of India,

TO ENQUIRE INTO THE ABUSES ALLEGED TO EXIST IN

EXPORTING FROM BENGAL

HILL COOLIES AND INDIAN LABOURERS,

OF VARIOUS CLASSES, TO OTHER COUNTRIES;

TOGETHER WITH

A N A P P E N D I X,

**CONTAINING THE ORAL AND WRITTEN EVIDENCE TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE
AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS LAID BEFORE THEM.**

CALCUTTA:

G. H. HUTTMANN, BENGAL MILITARY ORPHAN PRESS.

1839.



Figure 7 Calcutta Committee of Inquiry Report, 1839, containing Zuhoorun's testimony. Source: (Good, n.d.)

Shamshu Deen

Shamshu Deen, a former school teacher, is a genealogist and researcher who has assisted hundreds of Indian-origin families in the Caribbean in tracing their ancestors back to India. What began as a simple search for his relatives has turned into a painstaking procedure requiring both expertise and devotion. And a lot of what he's found helps piece together facts on India's lost history of indentured girmityas, as the agreements, they signed regarding their working conditions are being unfolded.

Originally from Bihar, Shamshu Deen is the fifth generation of an Indian family that moved to the United States. At family gatherings, he would spend time with the elderly, listening to their stories about 1972, he discovered his great-great-grandfather's contract of indentureship with the British. At Trinidad's National Archives, there are 20 volumes of general registers, which contain information on the Indians who went over the 72-year period of the indenture system. In fact, these are the only source of information left, and he is now using these details to help other immigrants find their families in India.

Shamshu Deen's ancestor, Mohammed Mookti, was an indentured immigrant who landed in Trinidad in 1852, according to the document he discovered. Because of the plague epidemic, his maternal great-great-grandparents had to flee India. He explained, "Tracing family history offered me a new vocation." "I began video graphing weddings in 1982, while teaching at a local school. Before I got to the bride and groom, I used to make a short documentary, chat to the parents, draw a map of the trip their great-grandparents travelled, take photographs, figure out who had which son, and so on. This provided me access to hundreds of Trinidadian family histories."

It wasn't only that he combed through material from various sources such as the General Register of Immigrants (GRI), the National Archives of Trinidad (NAT), and academic research; he often over 100 years old, they recounted hazy memories, which Shamshu Deen subsequently substantiated via study and proof. Documents include "basic information" such as a person's name, father's name, and area of origin, he. What we have done, however, is not in Trinidad, people were generally known by their first names when they arrived. Details such as

caste, creed and sect are crucial to be known since there may be 500 persons with the same name in a record that has more than 1 lakh people.

Shamshu Deen eventually travelled to India after years of hard effort and tracked his ancestry to Ghazipur and Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh, where he discovered three sets of relatives and a few in Bihar. He put together his five ancestral streams from India, as well as one of his wife's, over time. In his debut book, *Solving East Indian Roots in Trinidad*, he recorded the entire process (1994). Shamshu Deen has since assisted almost 300 families in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as roughly ten families in India, in locating their loved ones throughout the three nations.

Balliram Maharaj

Balliram Maharaj, a 75-year-old Trinidadian of Indian heritage, is one of Shamshu Deen's numerous beneficiaries. Balliram's talks with older family members, as well as his grandparents' old photographs, letters, antiques, and papers, indicated a magnificent history, but he wanted to make sure it wasn't all in his head.

In 1911, Balliram's great-grandfather arrived in Trinidad, where he now runs a supermarket chain. He once described how his grandmother was injected with something and her aborted child was thrown into the sea when she left India. *"India was also home to my wife's great-grandfather, who was born He returned to his hometown once the indenture system was abolished and founded a school. Afterwards, he went back to Trinidad"*

"Shamshu Deen takes a very methodical approach..." he explained. *"He tracked my paternal ancestry to India, as well as my wife's. We visited India in 2010 and discovered the school in Chetia, Uttar Pradesh, where my wife's extended family now resides. It seemed like I stepped back in time when I discovered a sign with the year the school was established and the name of the island where my wife's great-grandfather resided in Trinidad."* (Anon., September 1st 2021)

Kamla Persad-Bissessar

Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Trinidad's first female Prime Minister, was a devoted Hindu. Bissessar visited Bhelupur village in Buxor, Bihar, in 2012, owing to Shamshu Deen's efforts, to meet the descendants of her forebears who had moved to Trinidad approximately 122 years ago.

“Connecting families is not just an emotional endeavour, but it may also generate income via genealogical tourism,” “Global heritage tourism may include large family reunions with relatives from all over the world.” Shamshu Deen said.

Indian Arrival Day

Every year on May 5, Guyana observes the arrival of Indian indentured servants in the Caribbean with "Indian Arrival Day." The S.S. Hesperus and the S.S. Whitby landed in Guyana on May 5, 1838, along the coasts of Berbice and Demerara. They transported 396 Indians, known as "coolies," from Chota Nagpur, then Bihar, some 300 miles west of Kolkata. The British needed inexpensive labour since slavery had just ended and African-descended individuals had been freed in the British territories in 1833. They looked to India, the Empire's crown gem—a diamond that had turned into a sugar crystal.

Gaiutra Bahadur

According to Gaiutra Bahadur, author of the ground-breaking book “Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture”, women in Guyana today are frequently hacked to death. These acts of violence, according to Bahadur, are also a result of colony Women outnumbered males when the British began bringing people to the Caribbean. There were fewer women, so males had to compete for their love. Some of these people, such as plantation owners and magistrates, preyed on the naiveté Machetes, a weapon of the indenture, which was used by Indian males to punish women for "infidelity."

However, the bloodshed persists. In 2009, Jahajee Sisters collaborated with Sakhi for South Asian Women (both located in Queens) to establish a safe environment for domestic abuse survivors. They held poetry workshops and released *Bolo Behen! Speak Sister!* An anthology of Indo-Caribbean women's poems condemning the brutality of a male-dominated culture now in a second exile.

If you conduct a simple Google search on domestic violence in Guyanese households today, you'll find many anecdotes and reports. On March 8, 2016, International Women's Day, Ravindra "Birdie" Badhu killed Indrawattie "Sharda" Somwar of 77 Village, Corentyne Berbice. Then, he slashed her with a machete till she was dead.

Rajiv Mohabir

Here is what Rajiv Mohabir has to tell the world about his family's experience in the Caribbean.

Workers in need of food brought my family to the Western Hemisphere. It may sound as though my family's migration tale started off with a sense of autonomy, but it quickly devolved into one of dispossession and horror, with colonization's residual repercussions. Why should we commemorate the beginnings of our conquest in the Caribbean when we are still feeling the repercussions of brutal colonisation? This family haunting, this heritage, prompts me to examine myself and my community: Why???

My ancestor who arrived in the Western hemisphere first was indentured in 1885 and worked for more than 10 years. He landed in Guyana after crossing the *pagal samundar*, the perplexing *kala pani*, or "black water," into the Caribbean Sea. My forefathers and mothers stayed in Georgetown, Lusignan, New Amsterdam, and Crabwood Creek and established their life there. They took land concessions from the British government—land taken from indigenous people—and built villages on the outskirts of the Amazon jungle in lieu of a return trip to an India that would not take them back.

My Aji (paternal grandmother) told me about how her own father's father was duped into crossing the kalapani, or black sea, to Guyana, and how this suffering gave birth to us. In Newtown Literary, I quote her:

“Beta, India mein dis side ke people, de English, de white man from dis side say, ‘Leh abi go Guyana.’ or ‘Abi go Trinidad, or anywhere da side. You know, a-you get job an’ a-you go de good. An one-two year aftah a-you go come back.”

“So de fool dem people an’ bring ‘em come. How de catch ‘em? De been tell dem that abi go nuddah country an’ a-you go get plenty job, a-you go get ‘nuff money from cut cane, a-you go live happy. An’ India mein dem been a-punish. Wuk tiday you get food tiday, an’ you know tomorrow dem starve. So dem been a-haunted ti come away. An’ when dem bring ‘em dem na get house, dem na get nutin’, dem a-cut cane. Dem a-punish bad. But wha you go do? When me family been come dis country dem been very poor. All India-man been poor. None na been rich.” (Mohabir, n.d.)



Figure 8 Indenture Portrait, Courtesy by Rajiv Mohabir. Source: (Mohabir, n.d.)

We've been burned by the Empire's flames. What can anyone tell about the evils of having our bodies exploited for Empire's advantage by looking at us? How does the human body deal with psychological trauma? While some individuals were forced to migrate due to famine, others had been abducted and sent to the colonies, and other Indians accepted to travel without realising what it entailed, others travelled freely in search of financial gain. My family's origin tale began with the arrival of Indians in the Caribbean, but it also marked the beginning of major sickness, dependency, biases, and maladies that continue to haunt us now. I provide a list of ills—a postcolonial fallout—that I perceive as an indenture legacy that has been whitewashed by the Indian Arrival Day celebration. These evils together influenced my choice not to celebrate the holiday this year.

Mahabir, S., Taan Singing 180 Years After Indian Arrival In Guyana. *180 YEARS OF INDIANS IN GUYANA (1838-2018)*, p.43.

Maria del Pilar Kaladeen

One of the thousands of migrants who left their country in India to serve as indentured workers on sugar plantations in the Caribbean was Maria del Pilar Kaladeen's great-great grandmother. When it comes to indentured servitude and the lives of Caribbean individuals with Indian origin who moved to Britain during the Windrush era, she investigates the 'secret history' that surrounds it.

This is what she wrote:

A Windrush migrant's daughter from Guyana (then British Guiana) immigrated to the United Kingdom in 1961. Nearly 180,000 individuals from the Caribbean came to the UK from 1948 to 1963, including my father. The term "invisible traveller" is used to describe my father since, like many Caribbean individuals of Indian origin, he is not apparent in the overall picture of this movement, which is nearly often portrayed as being totally African-Caribbean in nature. Ignorance of the British Empire's indenture system, which lasted from 1834 to 1917 and transported my grandparents from India to the Caribbean, lies at the root of my family's disappearance from history.

As a result, descendants of indentured laborers in the United Kingdom have been "missed, miscategorized, and misunderstood," according to sociologist Steve Vertovec. While many people have read *The Lonely Londoners*, the defining literary masterpiece of the Windrush era, few are aware that its author, Samuel Selvon, is of Indian and Caribbean descent. The bulk of indentured Indian labourers were sent to Trinidad or British Guiana, although smaller groups were also sent to Jamaica, Grenada, St Lucia, St Vincent, and St Kitts & Nevis.

When I first saw a picture of the Empire Windrush, I was mesmerized. For the first time in my life, I saw someone who resembled my father's image from the Windrush saga. To work on

sugar plantations in the Caribbean, my great-great grandmother had to leave her native India in 1878. Many times, while traveling with her and her daughter, I pondered how the woman got up on the ship and whether she could have guessed that she would never see India again as it sailed out of Calcutta.

She did not return, like the majority of indentured labourers in the Caribbean and other colonies. Her narrative is part of a 'hidden history,' as I call it. Because the facts of the indenture system contradict the imperial benevolence narrative that dominated the abolition of slavery in British colonies, it is a history that is purposefully ignored.

Webb, J., Westmaas, R., del Pilar Kaladeen, M. and Tantam, W., 2020. *Memory, Migration and (de) colonisation in the Caribbean and Beyond* (p. 208). University of London Press.

Andrea Levy

When I was a little kid, I recall taking a London bus ride to get to a friend's house. Those were a few of decades ago, in the early 60's. One of the passengers on the bus was black. That was a rare sight back then. Like my parents, I could tell by his accent that he was from the Caribbean. Talkative, he greeted visitors with a pleasant smile and tried to get them to join him in conversation. Nevertheless, all of the other passengers, who were all white, looked at him with suspicion. Nobody was interested in talking to him; it was apparent that they didn't want anything to do with him. Nevertheless, he continued to attempt.

However, I also felt sorrow for his futile effort at making friends on a bus in London. If the passengers on the bus could simply get to know him, they would like him, I was sure of it. My family is from the Caribbean as well. I could relate to him. He morphed into my mother and father, my sisters, and me. But to the rest of the passengers, he was more than a stranger; he was an intruder in their world. I felt the urge to introduce myself to a few people. I could see that there were misunderstandings going on, but I had no idea why or what I could do about it.

The dude was unique. Neither his appearance nor his voice was the same. I wonder, why people of England couldn't recognise him.

The same thing would not happen in the same way now. Everyone is accustomed to a diverse range of cultures, and London buses are packed with people from all over the world. However, there are still gaps in our knowledge and comprehension. What ties existed 50 years ago that made Britain a natural destination for the Caribbean man on the bus? How and why did the United Kingdom establish those ties in the first place? These are the kinds of questions that intrigue me because they expose what many of us consider to be a forgotten past. It was clearly lost to me for a significant portion of my childhood, and it was a loss that caused me some difficulties.

After a long bus trip, I arrived at my destination. I attended to a nearby elementary school as a good cockney, he spoke. My neighbourhood was full of white kids who played rounders, skipping, and hide-and-seek outside. The goodies were plenty. Coronation Street, Emergency Ward 10 were among the shows I watched. A huge Arsenal fan. Tottenham Hotspur is a team I loathe. I lived the life of a typical working-class girl in London, and I loved it.

Then then, my parents had immigrated to the United States from Jamaica. As a result, my family felt quite out of place in the part of London where we resided because of that fact. When we arrived in the United States, we were a group Outsiders. Dad had been aboard the Empire Windrush when it sailed into Tilbury in June 1948 and altered the face of Britain for eternity (according to legend). My mother arrived in England aboard a Jamaican banana ship. In the same year, it sailed into West India port amid a rain of pyrotechnics that my mother thought were meant to greet her.

In Jamaica, my father worked as an accounting clerk for Tate & Lyle, among other firms. My mother worked as a teacher. My father had no problem getting a job when he needed to. Previously, he worked for the Post Office. A Jamaican teacher's license may be used in England, however my mother was not authorised to utilise her Jamaican credentials to teach.

Retraining was in order. As a result, mother taught herself to sew throughout my childhood. Even yet, she clung to the hope of becoming a teacher once more.

My parents came from a middle-class family. They were raised in big homes. They had servants as well. They came to Britain with British Empire passports in search of greater job and promotion possibilities. However, after they arrived, they struggled to locate suitable lodgings. For several years, they were forced to live in a single room. They were homeless for a while and then moved into half-way housing, where my father was not allowed to live with his wife and three children. They eventually moved into the municipal apartment where I was born and raised in Highbury.



Figure 9 Andrea Levy and her family, on a holiday at British Beach, 1970. Source: (Levy, 2020)

On one occasion, my mother was unable to afford to feed us. There are none. She feared that she might be compelled to approach someone, possibly a neighbour, for a loan. As she prayed for a solution, she went out into the street, where she found a one-pound note on the pavement. According to my mother, that wasn't a stroke of luck, it was a plan. Having no actual rights, my parents thought they had no choice but to accept what this nation had to offer.

After all, they were newcomers. They could get by as long as they didn't do something too unique that would irritate the English folks. My mother wished for my father's accent to fade and for him to quit repeating "nah man" and "cha" in every phrase. They never brought up the subject of Jamaica with anyone. If my mother saw a black person attracting attention, she would be humiliated. It also brought attention to her, something she despised. My entire family is light-skinned. Because of the class structure inherited from British colonial times, people in Jamaica took the colour of your skin extremely seriously, which had a major impact on my parents' upbringing.

Because of their upbringing, my parents believed that they were of a better class than anyone with a darker skin tone. Thus, they were cut off from other black Caribbeans who came to reside in the United States; they had no desire to associate with them whatsoever. My mother once told me that her father in Jamaica forbade her from playing with children who were darker than her. I had to, else I would have had no one to play with', she added with regret. Since her children will be growing up among white children in England, she was happy to be able to do so. We'd always have lighter-skinned kids to play with, and it was always a blast. I was also supposed to keep my distance from those with darker skin tones.

White folks, on the other hand, never had to consider it. But what if you weren't white? How black were you? All of this made sense to me. That was the standard by which I would be assessed. 'When are you going back to your own country?', 'Why are you here?', 'Why is your food so funny?', 'Why does your hair stand up?', 'Why do you smell?' were all questions we were asked, whether we were light-skinned or not. Our family was clearly labelled as foreigners with no right to remain in the country. I thought I owed them an apology when a member of the far-right National Front brandished one of their pamphlets in my face and started laughing. I hoped they would like me. Years would pass before I learned I was capable of being furious with them.

Even though it was rarely violent or dramatic, the racism I encountered had a significant impact on me. Self-loathing was a constant companion. Shame on me for having a family from the 'Caribbean' it wasn't because I didn't care about Jamaica. Neither I nor any of my pals had any

knowledge of the Caribbean. No one knew where it was or who lived there, nor did they understand why. When asked why black people lived here, they had little interest in finding out. As a result, it wasn't worth knowing.

My sense of foreignness became stronger as I grew older, as did my belief that nothing in my background – my class or race – was truly valuable. For the first time in my life, I met folks from the middle class at art school. The proper middle class — debutantes on ponies, for example. It became critical for me to keep my roots hidden. My undergraduate classmates were unaware that I lived on a council estate. When I was offered a ride home, I had my pals drop me off at a decent house's gate. I waved them off as I proceeded up the walkway. I then walked back to my flat as soon as they were out of sight.

As a textile designer, I worked for approximately five minutes before I realized it wasn't for me, despite my degree. That was followed by brief stints in retail, at the BBC, and the Royal Opera House, as well as a family planning clinic's front desk. There was a turning point. My part-time job was with Islington's sex education program for young people. One day, the workforce was required to attend a training on racial awareness. There was a request for us to break ourselves into two groups, one black, and one white. I crossed the room to the white side.

All of my friends, my boyfriend, and my roommates were white, which was odd because it was where I felt most at home. In the end, my co-workers had different plans for me. I crossed the floor cautiously. We were rudely awakened by this. For a week, I was confined to my bed. The thought of calling myself a black person made me nervous. No, I didn't feel qualified enough. A "black community" was required? The Caribbean must have been a frequent destination for you. Were your parents not supposed to be proud of your race? Do my buddies have to be African-American? So far apart from all of it, I feared being exposed as a fraud.

I created a novel called *The Long Song*, which is set during the slave trade in the Caribbean, and I did a lot of media interviews to promote it. The interviewees – both brilliant, university-educated individuals – acknowledged to me on two different occasions that they were unaware that Britain had used slaves in the Caribbean. Slavery, they believed, had only existed in

America. When I began conducting readings around the nation, I was startled at how many people had no idea where the islands were or how many there were. Many of the individuals I met assumed that everyone from the Caribbean was from Jamaica.

Was the post-slavery era any different? But what about the colonial-era century of racial segregation, when my parents learnt to recognize their racial position in society and to keep themselves apart? Sadly, there is no history of the Caribbean black people. The islands are no longer a popular tourist attraction. As a result, they are no longer rich. Natural resources are scarce in the region. Because some of the most renowned families in Britain no longer live there, they no longer have the authority they used to have when they did. What occurred and how it has impacted our lives now are all too easily forgotten. And yet the Tudors and the Norman Conquest are equally important parts of British history. No one would say that the Caribbean is the most important of Britain's imperial stories.

In terms of demographic mix, it is among the earliest and has lasted for a long time. India and Africa are examples of places where we may discuss the fading British legacy, whether its railways, bureaucracy or parliament systems. In a way, the Caribbean's history is everything.

Cities, towns and landscapes are not the only things influenced by what the British accomplished on those islands until they eventually departed. Likewise, Britain's rise to global prominence, its attitudes about race, and even how it perceives itself now, are all a direct result of the British Caribbean's influence on modern Great Britain. Stuart Hall, a cultural theorist, famously argued that 'the entire concept of Great Britain's "greatness" is linked up with Empire'.

Since 1965, there have been a considerable number of Caribbean-born Britons living in the United States. Three or four generations have passed since the London bus driver. Since the end of the Second World War, immigration to Britain has been a final, unexpected gift from the former empire to Britain. Incalculable advantages have accrued to Britain as a result of the labour and business of immigrants, such as those from the Caribbean. This country has

become a sophisticated multi-culture as a result of their ideas, their creativity, and their lifestyles. Unexpectedly, Britain has benefited much from this influx of talent and variety.

Levy, A., 2020. Back to my own country: An essay by Andrea Levy.

Chandrashekhar-Sharma

Chandrashekhar-Sharma, at 22 years old, left India as an indentured servant for British Guiana on October 2, 1893. Later, he produces a little Hindi booklet on his recruiting, crossing, and life on the plantation. He also told his children about his experiences. This was noted by his daughter. Chandrashekhar-Sharma, unlike other contract workers, does not go into farming and instead establishes a print business in Guyana.

He moves to Suriname and establishes a printing business there. In 1910, he embarks on a two-year journey to India before returning to Guyana. The second trip to India in 1920 finds him immersed in the Arya Samaj. Later in Guyana and Suriname, his role as an Arya Samaj propagandist becomes increasingly prominent. In 1936, he returns to India permanently, but he keeps up correspondence with his children until the end of his life. Later, he passes away. His son in Guyana receives a letter from his brother's children. The family's communication with Guyana and Suriname, on the other hand, grinds to a halt. In the early 1960s, his youngest daughter travels to India to reunite with her family and re-establish ties.

On the other side, Padmini Kanhai Mishre is a great-granddaughter of Chandrashekhar Sharma. With Sandew Hira, the head of the International Institute for Scientific Research, she has prepared an English-language booklet entitled *The Chandrashekhar-Sharma tale – A unique case study of the family in the Indian Diaspora*.

Radjinder Bhagwanbali: De nieuwe avatar van slavernij – Hindoestaanse migranten onder het indentured labour systeem naar Suriname, 1873 – 1916

Dr. drs Radjinder Bhagwanbali

Dr. drs Radjinder Bhagwanbali is a historian sociologist who has dedicated himself to archives in India. He is known for his pioneer work for the Surinamese community as well as the Hindustani community. The historian sociologist has reconstructed the history of Indian immigrants towards Suriname about the hardships of working on sugar plants during indentured labour.

During his research, he unleashed numerous unknown facts about the Indian bonded servants in Suriname. Some of them are;

- The systemic recruitment of labours was extremely unfair and deceptive. Recruiters promised immigrants that they were going to get better job opportunities without telling them where they are heading and what misery awaited them.
- During indentured labour from 1837 to 191, almost 20% (5,500) Indians died of wretched voyages and diseases.
- Although the laws of the Coolie agreement seemed to be fair, on papers only. The reality was completely different, women were raped every day, any form of resistance used to result in imprisonment and severe physical punishments. Wages were not paid as promised, racism and humiliation were at their peak by the colonisers.
- Furthermore, Indians were brutally treated and imprisoned during the indentureship. Whipping and flogging were not over with the slavery but continued during bonded labour as well. Not only that, but Bhagwanbali has also named people who were put in the crooked mantle.

Bhagwanbali recorded all of this information precisely and reproduced it accurately.

Bhagwanbali, R., 2010. *De nieuwe awatar van slavernij: Hindoestaanse migranten onder het indentured labour systeem naar Suriname, 1873-1916.* Amrit.

What Indians Think of Their Indo-Caribbean Relatives?

Professor Kumar is India's most senior history professor, specialising in the colonial period, when Indians were enslaved in the Caribbean and elsewhere. As a young man, he did his

dissertation research on firsthand accounts of an indentured labourer returning to India to resist the British.

He has also lived in, taught in, spoken in, and visited many of those nations, as well as organised visits on both sides, interviewed Indians from their homelands, and examined archive documents in Delhi, Calcutta, and the Caribbean countries (and elsewhere such as South Africa, Fiji, and Mauritius etc.). Consequently, his expertise as an Indian citizen and as a historian, along with his work highlighting the history and needs of Indo-Caribbean people through conferences, books, radio, television, posts, etc., make him the foremost authority in this field. He is also a member of the Indian National Congress (INC). When it comes to the relationship between India and PIOs, Dr Maharaj-work Ramdial's as a psychologist has allowed her to look at facts from a psychological viewpoint, rather than merely a social or economic one.

Even after decades, VS Naipaul's descriptions of what it's like to be an Indian in the West Indies still hold true when contrasted to Dr Maharaj-study Ramdial's today. Due to the fact that she is not affiliated with academics, her work is not contaminated by the colonial age notions taught in those nations regarding India and Indians. Here are some of their findings;

Most Indians know very little, if anything, about Indo-Caribbean people. They are typically astonished that Indians reside there, with the exception of a handful who play cricket for the West Indies, and assume they are new migrants or first-generation Indians. This is due to the fact that the history of indentureship is not taught in Indian classrooms or anywhere else. The West Indies, as colonial countries, were subjected to the same type of divide and rule that Britain used in India. The Church had an important role in converting people, and these new converts were given new jobs (particularly in education) in the newly independent countries.

The descendants of Indians in the area are unaware that most of what they were told by their prominent professors was false. Most Indians were 'low caste,' India was poor, and people were happy to flee; early Indians did not want to return; once an Indian Hindu crossed sea water, his caste was broken and he could not return; only poor people left India; people left

because of casteism, fatalism, and Hindu beliefs; it was good they left because only backward people lived there; and all pundits were wrong.

People in the Indo-Caribbean region are also unaware that Britain used a scourge earth policy in retaliation for those regions in North India that were fighting for independence, resulting in poverty in India (India was always rich, but looted by the British: hence the references to India as "The Crown Jewel" or "The Jewel of the British Empire." etc.). Such a phrase could only be applied to a prosperous country whose riches were the colonial empire's pride and joy.)

Many of the Indians who left India for these countries were not landless vagrants, but rather those who fought the British in the great 1857 "Sepoy Munity" (sepoy meaning soldier), which shows that Indians even in the British army in India, did not consider British rule as beneficial or benevolent and fought against the British rule. It also explains why the British were even more ruthless in punishing Indians accused of being freedom fighters, as well as further separating Indians by sending them overseas to fight for their independence.

Indians willingly came to work on plantations in the Caribbean, according to West Indian academics, but British administrative records in India and England show that the primary underlying reason after 1857 was to ship and incarcerate Indians away from India, beginning in the Andaman Islands to the east of India, and then to Mauritius and elsewhere. They did exactly the same thing with lawbreakers in the United Kingdom, sending them to Australia, as is widely documented. To this day, the Indians still refer to the Andaman Strait, located in the Bay of Bengal between India and Andaman Islands, as Kala Pani, which means that crossing it meant life imprisonment. Because of this, the indentured Indians were not just sent for cheap labour once slavery ended as some Caribbean scholars claim, but rather Britain made a strategic decision to suppress any potential united Indian public rebellion.

As a result, Indians were frequently forced to alter caste and name in order to avoid execution at the hands of the British. Brahmins and kshatriyas were particularly targeted because, as Hindu leaders and warriors, they provided a natural counterweight to British authority, which utilized missionary activity to undermine India's traditional culture and faiths. As a result, all

castes suffered under the British and banded together to oppose them. It also implies that the idea that all colonial labourers were 'low caste' or escaping Hindu persecution was incorrect.

Although just four castes existed originally, many of the hundreds of castes that appear in records were created by the British, including those who sold oil or cloth or jewellery or vegetables etc. Those were all merchants, or vaisyas. After a series of rebellions for independence, Britain sought to identify everyone, and putting everyone in a distinct 'caste' was seen as a useful method to keep them from joining. All these caste differences didn't appear in the Caribbean because they hadn't been in India for long enough when the British sent Indians offshore.

Indians in the villages now continue to chant songs of remembrance for those who have died (which goes against what was told about breaking caste and unwanted and unable to return to India). Furthermore, those Indians who went to those countries to earn money to remit to India after those British policies, only to have their return contracts revoked time and again by Britain, forcing them to remain in the new countries under ever changing regulations, so Britain would always have a labour supply.

Britain also prohibited the return of letters and money, causing families to lose contact. Why, after some time, Indians still loved India but had built families in the new nations, and didn't have touch with their loved ones back home. As a result, they felt that they could no longer return to India because they had no clue of their relatives' existence or locations (there was a lot of forced internal migration in India thanks to the British pursuit and punishment of anyone even suspected of acting against them.) There are also those Indians who have forgotten who has departed and where they've gone in their country. In other words, it wasn't like they didn't care about one other! Over time, policies imposed caused a great deal of damage.

Indians (in India) are largely unaware of these features of Indo-Caribbean people, and their reactions to why Indo-Caribbean people from former British colonies no longer speak Hindi, Avadhi, Brij Basha, Bhojpuri, Urdu, and other languages can be harsh. They have no idea that

the British, and subsequently the 'independent' Caribbean governments, did everything they could to repress Indian languages, culture, and religion.

Also, Indians feel that Hinduism practised in the Caribbean is highly traditional, as the practices are based on traditions that date back about 170 years. Caste homogeneity among the Indo-Caribbean people is not to blame for the lack of caste prejudice among Indians. Apart from this, there is no dowry system in India. Arranged marriages do not exist. Daughters have the same status as sons. Ironically, Indians view them as 'too western,' despite the fact that many Indians would like to see them more widely adopted into Indian society.

Because there is less emphasis on marrying for wealth or based on caste and skin colour, Indians perceive Indo-Caribbean people to be poor and unattractive. They don't realize that boasting about one's income and wealth is considered bad taste; that skin colours vary, even in a hot sunny tropical region; and that marrying solely on the basis of caste is seen as less relevant.

As a homeland, India is revered by many in the Indo-Caribbean diaspora. Worse, "autonomous" West Indian countries with large diasporic populations like Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and Jamaica do not or very seldom display their population and or its culture on a state or international level. For this reason, governments regard this person and its culture to be Indian rather than creole or Afro-Caribbean.

As a result, if newer generations feel more distant from India, it is due in large part to the fact that many of them are compelled to relocate from these Caribbean nations, notably to North America or Europe, to escape the prejudice experienced by Indians ancestors. This also explains why some people have converted or distanced themselves from India in order to adjust to life in the Caribbean or elsewhere without being discriminated against.

This is what a Jamaican girl, Sevdha Rose, has to say about this:

“I am Jamaican of East Indian descent. This is a topic that will result in VERY varied experiences for each person, but here's what I can share.

GOOD: It's mainly rewarding...at least for me. I enjoy having even a sliver of a connection with folks from quite diverse backgrounds. My career (dancing) is where I primarily interact, because dance is a fairly global language.

BAD: There is prejudice! However, I've found that most Indians I've met are quite kind when you show any interest in their culture(s) to the level that I have. I can absolutely claim that some Indians are less likely to take you seriously since you're from the Caribbean. For example, a DJ friend of mine from Suriname just informed me that he lies about being from India to increase his business. When I informed him I was Jamaican for the first time, his whole demeanour softened! We are all descended from individuals from lower castes, and a few people still revere the caste system, which I feel is a contributing factor. Then then, it's all right. More than enough kind individuals may be found in a country with so many residents.” (Rose, n.d.)

Chapter 9: Final Notes

- European expansion into the Caribbean began with Christopher Columbus' ill-fated voyage, and the sugar business, the black population, and the plantation complex were inextricably intertwined. Over the past 500 years, there has been an intense debate about whether or not local sugar production is worth it in comparison to the benefits of the plantation complex on a social and economic level. It was in the 1640s when English landowners began cultivating sugarcane in Barbados, employing a mixture of convicts, captives and African slaves. Sugar farming was highly profitable, and it soon extended across the Caribbean, as well as to Louisiana and Mississippi in the U.S. Hundreds of thousands of enslaved men, women, and children were transported from Africa to the Caribbean and America in order for Europeans to have access to sugar and rum, the primary products of sugar cane.
- People from many regions, races, and ethnicities were forced into servitude by Europeans when they conquered large portions of the world. They also established colonies all over the world. Other colonisers at the period were the French, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese, who enslaved a wide range of people, including Indians, African Americans, and Chinese and South Asians. Slavery was a major issue for these imperial countries and Britain after 1600.
- Since the 1770s, British abolitionists have waged a ferocious campaign against the transatlantic slave trade. In reality, three abolitionist petitions alone gathered 1.3 million signatures in 1833. Antislavery sentiments spread to Upper Canada (later Canada West), prompting the 1793 Act to Limit Slavery in the Province to be passed. On the other hand, abolitionist attempts in the eastern provinces of Québec (at the time, Lower Canada), Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick had failed. In 1793, for example, Pierre-Louis Panet submitted a bill in the National Assembly to abolish enslavement in Lower Canada, but the matter was debated for numerous sessions and never voted on.
- On August 1, 1834, the British Parliament enacted the Slavery Abolition Act, which freed over 800,000 slaves in South Africa and the Caribbean from slavery. Everyone in all of America's colonies was prohibited from purchasing, selling, or possessing human beings as property under the legislation. Before the Civil War, the 1st of August was observed with pleasure and fervour by African Americans.
- The bulk of the plantation class rejected the abolishment bill and justified the necessity of slavery using economic charts. They stated that paying ex-slaves salaries or appointing laborers for the same work would have a negative impact on the economy. Another difficulty that the planter class had to deal with was that estate managers mishandled the properties they were in charge of due to absentee ownership. Furthermore, the Planters had borrowed much from British merchants and were unable to repay their loans due to inadequate yields. Many individuals kept borrowing to revive their plantations.

- When it came to lending money to West Indian planters, banks and commercial firms were wary. They no longer demanded estates as security for loans, while Colonial West Indies did not make any substantial planter-loan commitments to British Guiana or Jamaica's Planters' Bank. Ex-slaves from the more populated colonies were forced to migrate in large numbers due to a lack of a reliable, affordable source of labour once the war was over. A lack of interest in hiring ex-slaves at higher salaries led the planter elite to ask the British government to let more African and Asian indentured workers into the nation.
- The prohibition of the slave trade, as well as the high mortality rates among slaves (which easily outweighed their birth rates), resulted in a serious labour shortage on the island, to the point where landowners were seeking for alternate sources of labour even before slavery was banned. The colony's first wave of indentured laborers came in 1834, with a total of 75 individuals.
- Under a scheme developed by Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, a civil contract between Britain and Indian labourers was set up for an initial period of five years. The laborers were confined to their farms and paid a pittance of one penny a day. Any breach of contract resulted in an automatic two-month prison sentence or a £5 fine. It would not be incorrect to suggest that Indians were treated similarly to enslave Africans, inhumanely and cold-bloodedly. The contract was signed in 1838, making it a law.
- From 1838 until 1917, more than 500,000 Indians, including men, women, and children, were brought. There were a number of colonies that were halted for shipping because to the harsh treatment of planters Danish colony on St Croix, for example, was so harsh with its employees that the Indian government terminated the contract after just one trip of bringing in foreign laborers. As a result, other colonies had to deal with such restrictions on and off until 1917.
- Local colonial administrations handled the majority of the costs of systematic recruiting and migration from India to the Caribbean, and landowners had to foot a large amount of the bill. Under authorisation from the Madras and Calcutta migrant guardians, emigrant agencies scoured the Indian countryside for recruits.
- These emigrant agencies methodically and regionally recruited labour. They chose men, women, and children from tribal communities and metropolitan outskirts in the early years. Recruiting took place in the remote hinterlands in subsequent decades.
- For the first time ever, the Caribbean was populated with Chinese enslaved labourers. The planters were worried about losing their labour force when slavery was abolished in 1807. Tea was used as a substitute for sugar in China due to a decline in sugar output. Approximately 18,000 Chinese workers from Canton, China, lived and worked in the Caribbean during this time period. A total of 15,720 Chinese immigrated to British

Guiana (now Guyana) between the years 1853 and 1879 as of 1893, Jamaica had 4,845 Chinese labourers. In 1859, Martinique and Guadeloupe each had 500 people.

- From Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, almost 400,000 Indians escaped to the Caribbean. In India, there were numerous push pressures, such as the collapse of industry, the decline of agriculture, the caste system and taxation, as well as low wages and the 1857 uprising. As a result of kamiuti, the poor in Bihar profited from their own and their children's services. In order to escape their restrictive social situation, South Indian pariahs (untouchables), pannaiyals, and padiyals (lower castes of agricultural labour) sold themselves and their children into lifetime obligations.
- Three to four months were required to go by sailing ship from India to Trinidad. This led to constant fear of fires at sea, as well as a storm or other natural calamity. Infectious disease epidemics and outbreaks of illness were commonplace. On the Moy, which sailed from Calcutta to British Guiana in 1904, they ate cooked rice because the vegetables and fruits would often spoil. A quarter of early immigrants would die because of inadequate living accommodations, which had to be enlarged even though 25 % would die.
- South Asian labours fought diligently to ensure the survival of the sugar industry and the growth of the rice industry. They made significant contributions to village development, cash crop cultivation, cow keeping, milk selling, and other economic activities throughout their indentureship. Starting in the late 1800s, Indian immigrants worked as cab drivers, bankers, tailors, carpenters, boat builders, charcoal makers, goldsmiths, porters, small-scale manufacturers, and fishermen in non-plantation jobs.
- Regarding forced labour, the planters were also active in the establishment of certain discourses about "Indian" and 'Negro'. These lectures are rife with stereotypes of luxury-loving lazy immoral Negroes as well as the docile hardworking Indians of Planter's day. While these negative racial characteristics are wrongly considered to be innate characteristics of diverse races, the colonial history that led to such discourse is often forgotten or disregarded.
- Indentured Indian labourers eventually joined the uprising. This was taken up by Indian nationalists in India, and it spread to Fiji and Mauritius in the years that followed. On March 12, 1917, it was determined that recruiting Indians to work in overseas colonies would be halted due to military requirements of the First World War, and it was never resumed after the war. The British Imperial Government and the Government of India agreed to abolish indentureship on January 1, 1920.
- The Empire Windrush landed at Kingston, Jamaica, in 1948 to pick up troops on leave on way from Australia to the United Kingdom. When the British Nationality Act of 1948 was being discussed in parliament, some Caribbean migrants chose to depart "before time." There was no immigration restriction for CUKCs in the UK before to 1962, and they were allowed to stay indefinitely.

- Many young people left the Caribbean for a number of reasons, including job opportunities in the UK and a yearning for a better way of life. Others left to escape oppression at work or at home, while others found the decision to leave more difficult than they had imagined because it meant leaving behind family and friends. While some of these men and women had served or worked for the UK during the war, many of them left the Caribbean on their own rather than being recruited. They felt as if they were "coming home" and joining an imperial family to which they felt they belonged.
- These early post-war labourers made a significant contribution to the British economy and prosperity throughout the immediate post-war period and for decades afterwards. Businesses in key sectors recruited employees from Caribbean nations rather than waiting for people to arrive in the UK as the need for trained and minimum wage workers rose throughout the 1950s. London Transport transported over 3,500 Barbadians to the UK, paying their fares to the UK and then recovering them through deductions from their salaries. This tradition, which linked economic migrants to specific positions, continued over time.
- Empire Windrush set off from Yokohama, Japan, for her final voyage in February 1954. She sailed from Kure to the United Kingdom, then returned to the United States via Hong Kong, Singapore, Colombo, Aden, and Port Said. Injured United Nations veterans of the Korean War and servicemen from the Duke of Wellington's Regiment who had been wounded at the Third Battle of the Hook in May 1953 were among the Ses passengers, along with a handful of other passengers. The ship caught fire immediately after leaving Hong Kong due to engine difficulties and other issues. It took 10 weeks to get to Port Said.
- On Sunday, March 28, there was an explosion and fire in the engine room at 6:15 a.m. The blast killed the third engineer, two other engine-room crew members, and the first electrician, while a fifth crew member in the engine room and one in the boiler room survived. The four major generators were in the flaming engine room, thus there was no electricity on board; the backup generator was started, but the main circuit breaker malfunctioned, making it unusable.
- Working conditions were difficult, with long hours and poor pay. Given the labourers' frail physical state following the lengthy journey, this took a toll. According to available statistics, Jamaica's yearly death rate in 1870 was 12 percent and barely altered throughout the years, since the same percentage remained typical in Mauritius thirty years later. From the age of five, children were expected to assist their parents in their job.
- Many employees tried to flee but were recaptured and imprisoned for their efforts. In certain cases, their five-year contract was extended to ten years as a result of a failed attempt to leave. Some employees returned home after the conclusion of the contract, but others preferred to stay, especially women who had left home after a conflict with their parents because they were unlikely to be accepted back into their family after

spending many years in a foreign nation. Most of the people who worked on the Kenya-Uganda railroads returned to India at the conclusion of their contract, contrary to common opinion.

- In a nutshell, Indenture Labour was a new system of slavery that brutally exploited human rights of more than a million South Asians. The entire history of indentureship is filled with filth, ill-treatment, misery, gloom and pain. This book covers the fundamentals of slavery, its abolition and the introduction of indentureship that shows how many races of the planet have been exploited as slaves, it's not a trauma stigmatised only with African Americans. Also, it's a summarisation of several hidden and elapsed stories of history that the world needs.

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