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INTRODUCTION

One is often faced with the task of answering the interesting questions; who am I; where did I come from and what am I doing in a foreign land thousands of miles away from my motherland. There is no doubt that I am a descendent of an immigrant who came to this country more than 100 years ago.

In this project I will endeavour to trace my family roots to the best of my ability. Admittedly I have very few documentary ~~indexes~~ ^{evidences} to make an accurate appraisal of existing conditions that prevailed in the early days of my ancestry. The Department of Internal Affairs has been very helpful in supplying me with an accurate copy (B.M. 25) of the arrival of my great grand father. I have the task of figuring out the reasons for the arrival of my great grand father here, and also the political, economic and social conditions that precipitated such a move. This move on their part to leave their settled way of life and come out to a strange, new and undeveloped land was no doubt a courageous step.

My great grand father came to South Africa in 1878 on the Indentured labour Scheme.

REASONS FOR THEIR COMING TO SOUTH AFRICA

After the abolition of slavery the sugar producing colonies were hit severely due to labour shortage. Several methods were made to introduce alternative source of labour supply. In Mauritius, Indians under the Sirdars, filled the gaps adequately.

"After an inquiry had been carried out into the abuse of the Indians, in 1838 the government agreed to a system of indentured labour - subject to certain conditions.

Immigration had to be on a voluntary basis. The recruiters had to be licenced, protectors of immigrants had to be stationed in both countries."

In 1860 Natal ventured on the indentured labour scheme. Natal could not complain that she had been deprived of her labour sources because when Natal became a part of the British Colony slavery had been stopped. There were thousands of Zulus living in Natal but they were found to be unreliable and untrustworthy. Often they would leave their work to attend to tribal festivals. They were also not suited to work on the cane fields.

In 1859 the cane growers had seen that Indians had been used successfully in Mauritius, Law 14 of 1859 was passed in which the government undertook to provide labour from India, or companies could import them individually.

Contracts were drawn up. The initial contracts included a free transport. They were paid 10 shillings per month, for three years, later they were extended to five years. They were also given rations, accomodation and medical attention. The first group arrived in November 16, 1860 in the ship 'Truro'. They worked as agricultural labourers in the colony's sugar estates.

Not all these labourers returned to India when their contracts expired. They were given the choice of re-indenture, a free passage home to India, or freedom and a small plot of land; they usually chose the last one.

The land given was usually away from the estates and the villages. Some were venturous and grabbed this offer, the others re-indentured or worked as domestic servants.

"In 1902 the payment of an annual licence of £3,00 was imposed as the price for remaining in the country as free Indians. But the sugar fields found it difficult to retain workers who were attracted by higher wages to transfer to coal mining or other employment. Continued immigration was the only answer to the problems."²

Meanwhile the number and proportion of Natal born Indians were adding to a growing supply of free labour and in 1904 they numbered 19 000 and constituted 22 % of the total Indians in Natal.

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There were many who saw the Indians not only as labourers but as political competitors in the economic field especially as Indian traders and others were also coming to the country. Attempts were made to induce the Colonial Office in London to restrict the immigration of free Indians.

'The immigrants had to work 9 hours per day except Sunday, Good Friday, Christmas Day, and New Years Day. Employers had to return a list twice a year to the immigration agent giving a list of servants and particulars of their conditions.³

The Lieutenant Governor and the resident magistrate were empowered to visit and inspect estates where coolies were employed to ascertain their state and condition.

3. Dr Mabel Palmer et others:
The Indian as a South African.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

In the early days of Indenture the sugar planters of the coastal belt were by far the biggest importers of Indian labour. Later in the nineteenth century the new coal mines in Northern Natal also entered the market for such labour.

The free Indians centred around the town and soon the trading centres grew. An off shoot of this development was the spread of Indians along the main transport route from Durban to the growing inland towns.⁴

Others did not renew contracts but began market gardening.

THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF INDIA (1860 - 1900)

A. POLITICAL CONDITIONS

The Revolt of 1857 - '58 had far - reaching repercussions, not only in India but in Great Britain as well. On 2 August 1858 the Government of India Act was promulgated in the British Parliament and this meant that from now on the British Parliament was going to rule India and hence determine the future of India's teeming masses.

During the period 1885 - 1905 the focal point of the Indian political scene was the birth of Indian nationalism. In 1854 the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S) examination system was introduced and this offered any boy born in British India the opportunity to enter the ranks of the British Indian Bureaucracy. When a Bengali Brahman, Surendranath Banerjee, scored high marks in the Indian Civil Service examinations it naturally seemed that he would enter the world of the British Indian bureaucracy. However he was disqualified on a minor detail but the Queen's Bench judged in Banerjee's favour. Banerjee joined the Civil Service but after three years he was dismissed. Although he pleaded his case, it was to no avail. Thus in 1876 he founded the Indian Association in Calcutta.

In 1885 representatives from every province of British India convened at Bombay and under the presidency of Womesh C. Bonnerjee formed the Indian National Congress. The Congress came to embody the dreams and aspirations of a new India. Congress membership was overwhelmingly Hindu and although the third Congress Meeting in Madras contained eighty three Muslim delegates, they never really felt comfortable in the congress body.

Although the members of Congress voiced their loyalty to the Crown they all held some grievance against British rule in India. The aims of congress were at this stage the effective opening of the Indian Civil Service to Indians, opportunities to serve on various government councils, Britain should spend more of the revenue she gained from India to be spent on internal development and less on colonial wars.

Although the viceroy often ignored the resolutions of the congress, they "were the platforms of the Indian Nationalism. They were initially framed in a spirit of loyal co-operation and emulation by the moderate loyal leadership of congress" (Walpert 259) but became revolutionary after 1905.

This then briefly, was the political situation in India during the period under review. However, it must be mentioned that besides Banejee and Bonnerjee, there were other political figures like the Marathi Tilak and the Tamilian G.S.Aiyar. Yet Despite their are common feature that of ensuring for the Indians better canditions under British rule, they were all composed of middle class Indians who were the creations of the British. It was only when Dr. Ambedhar appeared on the scene that the plight of the majority of Indians the untouchables, began to be heard and it was only when Gandhi joined the Congress that the untouchables and their interests received attention by that body.

B, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The growth of British supremacy in India was different to previous occupations of the country. Previously, the change of dynastic rule did not affect the social structure, production property relations or administration. During the period of British occupancy a social- economical revolution occured which climaxed in the destruction of the old institutions and in the creation of new classes and forces with far- reaching effects, effects that still bedevil India. The creation of the Zamindar class now meant that for the first time India possessed a land - owning class. This meant that the Zamindar ^{sp} - ~~ded~~ as he saw fit as vegonds his land and hence began to exploitation created for the first time a landless peasant class.

It was during British rule in India that the Indians' middle class emerged as a direct result of British policy in India. Together with the castes whose traditional occupation was study and teaching or government service, they began to reap the benefits of English education. It was to their new middle class that the lawyer, the teacher, the civil servant the merchant and the industrialist of the 19th belonged. "They constituted the country's intelligent class which formed the link between the East and the West, and provided political leadership to the Indians. Their aspirations and desires became the aspirations and desires of India." (Chand, p351).

The natural instinct of the Indian middle class was to gain employment in commerce, industry and the bureaucracy but it faced stiff opposition from the British middle class who were the main power behind British rule in India. This was an expression of the conflict between the middle classes of India and Britain, desiring wealth of prestige and the other already possessing them.

The land - system introduced by the Britain disrupted traditional rural life. The disintegration of the old village system resulted in a snapping of the social bonds that held the different sections of the rural community together. The joint family system received a shattering blow. Co-operation was replaced by competition. The collective life of the village gave way to individualism. Taxation introduced by the Britain hampered agricultural progress and reduced the cultivating classes to a position of ^{subject} object poverty.

British companies began to export raw cotton from India and ^{import} improves the manufactured ^{wool} gannery into India rather than manufacture the product in India itself. ~~Their~~ only tended to destroy the Indian home industry.

Thus British fiscal and land policy in India destroyed the ancient institutions and rural organisations under which Indians had operated for centuries. Thus the code that protected social organisations from all external influences was broken and the way became open for the creation of

a new society organised on the basis of private property individual
enterprise accumulation of capital and Aechnollogical progress.

C. THE CASTE SYSTEM:

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This system implied job reservations only to the family eg. the son had to follow the father's occupation. Professions became the obligatory monopolies of the families and to perform them is not surely a right but a duty imposed by birth upon the children. Such a system must reign in a society before we can say that that society is subject to the rule of the caste.

Different levels in society not ^{only} monopoly but also the privilege eg. paying tax by certain groups and others being exempted. Personal "status" for life is determined by rank of the group to which one belongs. We are bound to say that inequality is also the product of the caste system.

In India the Caste System was determined by the job one did. This isolated one group from another. There were more than 2000 different castes eg. even with a particular job there were different groups; no one group did the complete article. There was no mobility from one group to the next and one could not change his caste through education or training. Sometimes groups would leave to take up new professions. Marriages outside the caste was strictly forbidden.

It was this caste system which eventually brought the downfall of India. The defence of India was left in the hands of a warrior class. When there were foreign invasion there were no co-operation from the other castes. Many who converted to Islam, Buddhism and Christianity were from the lower classes. They saw conversion as a means of escaping the evils of the caste system. Some even left the country and went to the British Colonies.

MY ANCESTORY

My great grandfather, VYEARAGAVALOO CHENGLEROYAN came to South Africa on 11 March 1878. What had tempted him to come here no relatives seem to know for sure. What is certain, however, is that he came under the Indentured Scheme. He worked on the sugar estates for ten years and then acquired a piece of ground and began market gardening. He had to sign a contract for his services and also his release from the service.

ARRIVAL

My great grand father came in the "Suffolk 2ND"; on the 11 March 1878. He departed from the district of Chenglepet. Whether his family knew of this move is uncertain, but he did give his brother's name as next of kin. There were a few others who also came from the same village on that trip. These people formed a small group and were given a nickname. There were eight adults and a child. Whenever meals were served on the ship they had to collect "eight and half bowls". They were thus known as "Yetra kini" - meaning eight and half bowls.

These people came from the village of Thamal and were thus Tamil speaking. They brought with them their culture, customs and traditions.

OCCUPATION

He worked on the Illovo Sugar Estate for ten years. After this he remained in the country and began gardening. He did not want to take land that was offered at Umzinto but decided to remain in Durban.

At that time there were many ex indentured Indians flocking to seek work on the mines and in the railways. What made him remain is uncertain. I suppose it was because he was now married and had a few children.

MARRIAGE

When he came to South Africa he was 30 years old. Whether he had been married and left his family behind is still uncertain.

In South Africa he married Yellama Nayagar, who was Colonial born. They had five sons and three daughters. No-one seems to know when he died, but, Yellama died during the 1918 epidemic. Many claim this is the worst epidemic they have heard about. Multiple funerals in a single family was not an uncommon sight.

None of the children worked on the sugar estates. The males worked in the factories i.e. oil industry in Jacobs/Clairwood; later they went into gardening.

SETTLEMENTS

His initial place of settlement was around Stella Hill. From there they moved to around where the present Steinbank Nature Reserve is. Later the family settled in Clairwood South - i.e. near the present Clairwood Race Course and lived at 15 Barrier Lane.

After the death of Vyearagavaloo, his sons lived together. Most of them were married and working on the farm. My grandfather Armoogam Govender began to play a dominant role in the family. He was very highly regarded by his community. The family members always came to him if any serious decisions had to be taken.

CONCLUSION

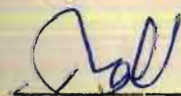
It is interesting to note with the birth of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 the Afrikaner Government recognised the domicile right of the South African Indian ie. South African Citizenship at the same time one may reflect that our ancestors lived in the country for almost 100 years without a domicile. The South African Indian having obtained to play a more important role in the economic and political role in the upliftment of South Africa. The time is right for the South African Indian to play a leading role in the Social, cultural, educational, economical and political role in the advancement of a better life in South Africa.

B.M.25

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRSCOPY OF SHIP'S LIST OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT

Serial Number	:	<u>173</u>
Colonial Number	:	<u>15996</u>
Date of Arrival	:	<u>11 MARCH 1878</u>
Name of Ship	:	<u>"SUFFOLK" 2ND</u>
Place of Registration	:	<u>-</u>
Date of Registration	:	<u>-</u>
Number in Register	:	<u>-</u>
Name	:	<u>NYEARAGAVALOO</u>
Father's Name	:	<u>CHENGLE ROYAN</u>
Age	:	<u>30 YRS</u>
Sex	:	<u>MALE</u>
Caste	:	<u>VUNNIA</u>
District	:	<u>CHENGLEPET</u>
Thanna/Taluq	:	<u>CONJEVERAM</u>
Village	:	<u>THAMAL</u>
Height	:	<u>5'3"</u>
Bodily Marks	:	<u>A SCAR ON THE CHIN</u>
Name of Next-of-Kin	:	<u>PERUMAN (BROTHER)</u>
Relations Accompanied	:	<u>-</u>
Small Pox/Vaccinated	:	<u>VACCINATED</u>
Remarks	:	<u>-</u>

Certified a true copy.



REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE



(MAN'S)
**CONTRACT OF SERVICE WITH INDIAN
 IMMIGRANTS.**

We It Remembered,

That on this 23rd day of April
 in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and ~~Eighty~~ Ninety
 and Telucksing of Suckling Indian Immigrant
 No. Bandur appeared before me,
41698 Louis H. Mason Protector of Immigrants,
 and in my presence signed (or made his mark) to the following Contract of Service:—

The said Telucksing agrees to
 hire the services of the said Indian Immigrant, and the said Indian Immigrant agrees to
 render the said
 his services in the capacity of General Labourer for Five Years, commencing on the
23rd day of April, in the Year of our Lord
 One Thousand Eight Hundred and ~~Eighty~~ Ninety

And it is further agreed between the said Parties, that the said Indian Immigrant shall be employed as above for six days in each week, save as in such Law is mentioned, and that the hours of labour shall not be more than nine hours daily, between sunrise and sunset, with a break of at least an hour for

And it is further agreed between the said Parties, that the said Telucksing shall
 pay to the said Indian Immigrant, as such servant as aforesaid, wages at and after the rate
 of TEN SHILLINGS for the first year, ELEVEN SHILLINGS for the second year, TWELVE
 SHILLINGS for the third year, THIRTEEN SHILLINGS for the fourth year, FOURTEEN
 SHILLINGS for the fifth year, for the remuneration of the services of the said Indian Immigrant, and that such wages shall be paid on the first day of each month.

And lastly, the said Telucksing
 doth hereby bind and oblige himself to give, grant, and provide, to and for the said Indian Immigrant, and for such family as may be allotted, good and comfortable lodging, wholesome and suitable food, and proper medical attendance and medicines, during the period for which this present contract is made, and otherwise to observe and fulfil all the conditions and obligations of the Coolie Laws of the Colony so far as the same are applicable to this Contract and Agreement.

Bandur

His X mark.

The preceding Agreement was signed by the above-named Parties in my presence, on the day and year above written, voluntarily, the same being, as far as I am able to judge, fully understood by them respectively.

L. H. Mason
 Protector of Immigrants.

INDIA COMES TO NATAL

Reproduction of a Certificate of Discharge given to one Mr. Roopia.

NATAL

Certificate of Discharge.

SCHEDULE H. (SECTION 100)

No. 921 24 Decr 1897

I HEREBY CERTIFY that Roopia
 Indian Immigrant No. 1 has duly completed his term of indenture
 of five years in terms of Indian Immigration Law No. 25, 1891, and is
 released from his obligation to perform further service in this Colony under
 indenture.

DESCRIPTION

Father's Name S. S. S.

Age 5 years

Height 4 Feet 11 Inches

Bodily Marks Small marks on left hand

Date of Arrival in Colony July 17th

Ship 22

Last Employer Mr. S. S. S.

OFFICE OF THE PROTECTOR OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS,
 DURBAN, NATAL.

W. S. S.
 Protector of Indian Immigrants.

Documents on pages 15 and 16 are similar to the ones that the Indentured Labourers signed

15 - shows the contract of Service

16 - certifies that the Indian has been discharged from his service-contract.

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 S.A. Institute of Race Relations.
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4. Wolpert, S: A New history of India.
5. Cellstin Bougle: Essays on the Caste System.
6. The Indian Annual Settler Issue. 1980.

INTERVIEWS

1. T.Nayagar: 48 Amritsar Place Merebank.
2. A.Govender: 9 Tullander Place Merebank.
3. D.Govender: 19 Jooma Road Isipingo Rail.
4. P.Govender: 11 Arcot Place Merebank.
5. G.Govender: 43 Himalaya Road Merebank.
6. D.Naicker: 40 Floradale Road Silverglen.
7. G.Nayagar: Reservoir Hills.
8. T.Pillay: 15 Alipore Road Merebank.



THE LATE VYEARAGAVALOO AND
YELLAMA